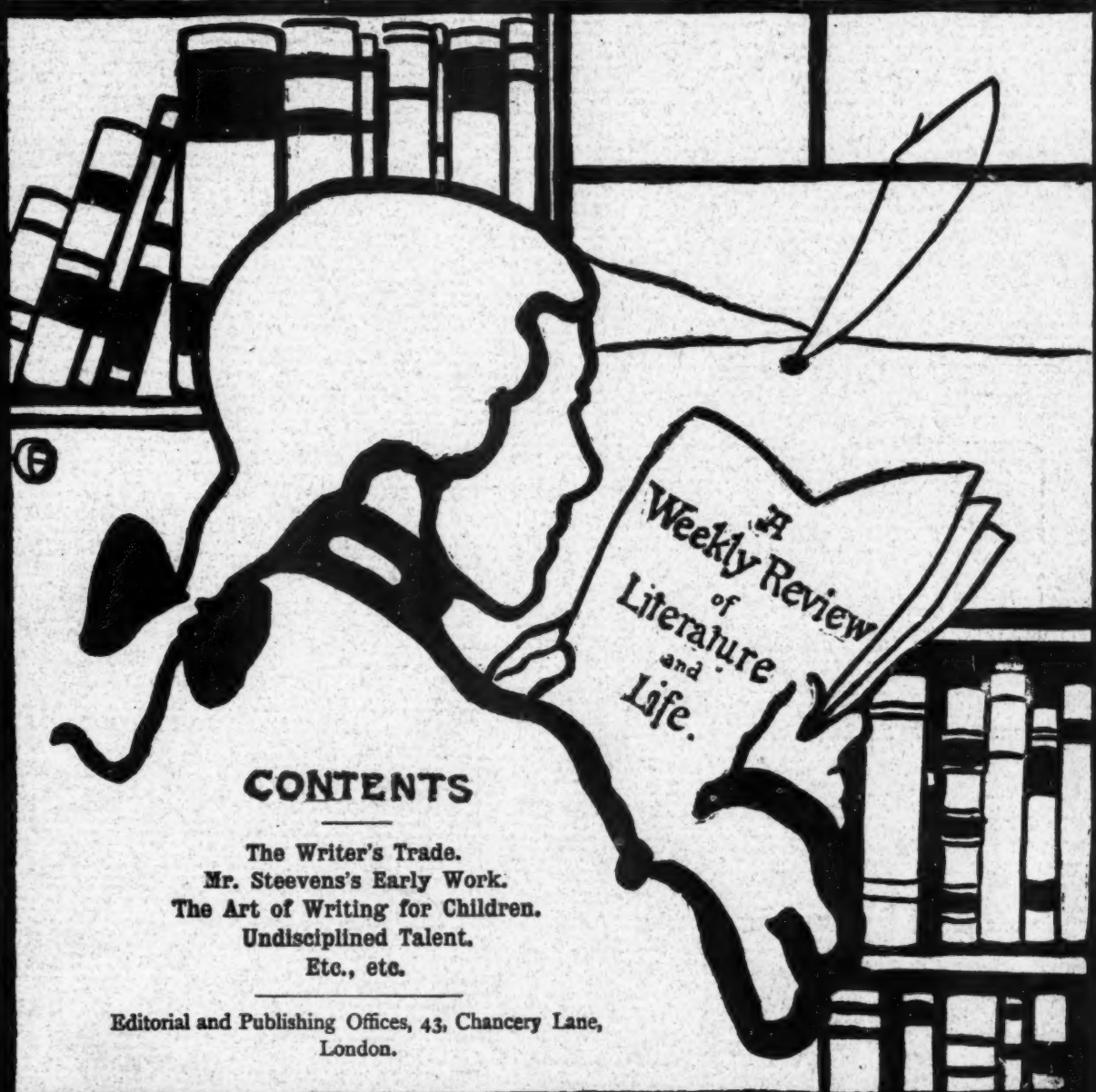


JULY 7, 1900.

The Academy



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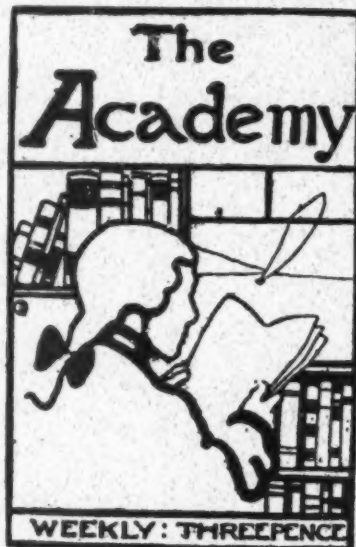
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The Literary Week.

MR. JOHN MORLEY's *Life of Cromwell*, now appearing serially in the *Century Magazine*, will be published in book form in the autumn by Messrs. Macmillan.

AMONG Mr. G. W. Stevens's effects, which have been returned from Ladysmith, were six unpublished articles, called "War and Mud" (an account of his arrival at Ladysmith), "The Fight that Failed" (Lombard's Kop), "The Investment," "The Thirty Light Horsemen," "The Conies are a Feeble Folk," and "The Raid on Gun Hill." These are the type-written copies of articles which were sent out from Ladysmith, and lost. The first of them was published in the *Daily Mail* on Thursday. Here is his first acquaintance with Ladysmith:

Through the rain-blubbered window I saw a sopping-sanded platform and little red-roofed station buildings streaked with water and mud. A few skimpy trees hung their leaves limply. When I got out they were tumbling the luggage into sallow puddles. My skin was stale with the sleep you take in your clothes, and the air of dawn clung darkly to it like wet linen. Ladysmith—good Lord!

As I slid and staggered up a bank and round a corner, there appeared half a dozen Indian camp-followers—sopping khaki putties and wringing turbans, shrunken with cold, ambling miserably through the mire, skating vaguely over the slime with bowed backs and dead toes and fingers. Gloom, drip, shiver, mud—and this was Ladysmith and this was glorious war!

MANY friends of the City of London School have felt and expressed the desire that the career of Mr. G. W. Stevens should be suitably commemorated in the place where he was educated. A committee has accordingly been formed, and arrangements have been made to present to the school a replica of the well-known portrait by the Hon. John Collier. It is also intended, if sufficient contributions are received, to found an annual prize.

THUS they honour their literary men in Poland. The people of Warsaw have decided to signalise Henry Sienkiewicz's jubilee by a gift to him of landed property. A committee has been formed to collect subscriptions, and has already succeeded in raising a large sum, with which it is proposed to purchase an estate for the author in the province. The celebration of his jubilee and the presentation of the estate are to take place next November.

OWING to the printers having gone to press with the last signature of Mrs. Craigie's novel, *Robert Orange*, without receiving the press-proof, a sentence has been missed out on page 408. It is in Disraeli's last letter, and should go in between the words, "cause of the quarrel" and "Orange applied." It runs as follows: "The passion of love invariably drives men and women to an extreme step in one direction or another. It will send some to the Cloisters, some to the Tribune, some to the stage, some to heroism, some to crime, and all to their natural calling."

PROF. WALTER RALEIGH, of Liverpool, the author of *The English Novel*, and of a brilliant, but wilful, book on *Style*, has been appointed successor to Prof. Bradley in the Chair of English Literature at Glasgow.

MR. RICHARD HARDING DAVIS contributes to *Scribner's Magazine* a characteristic account of the Relief of Ladysmith. It is marked by good observation and sympathy. When Mr. Davis rode into Ladysmith he met two officers. One of them handed him a list of the prices that had been paid during the siege for food and tobacco. The price of cigars struck him as specially pathetic—no wonder; they cost over three shillings a piece. Mr. Davis produced a handful of cigars from his pocket and offered them to the officers. We must give this "Thing Seen" in his own words:

They each took one, but they refused to put the rest of the cigars in their pockets. Then a beautiful thing happened. They lit the cigars, and at the first taste of the smoke—and they were not good cigars—an almost human expression of peace and goodwill and utter abandonment of joy spread over their yellow skins and cracked lips and fever-lit eyes. The first man dropped his reins and put his hands on his hips and threw back his head and shoulders and closed his eyelids. I felt that I had intruded at a moment which should have been left sacred. Another boy officer in stainless khaki and beautifully turned out, polished and burnished and varnished, but with the same yellow skin and sharpened cheek-bones and protruding teeth, a skeleton on horseback, rode slowly toward us down the hill. As he reached us he glanced up and then swayed in his saddle, gazing at my companions fearfully. "Good God," he cried. His brother officers seemed to understand, but made no answer, except to jerk their heads toward me. They were too occupied to speak. I handed the skeleton a cigar, and he took it in great embarrassment, laughing and stammering and blushing. Then I began to understand; I began to appreciate the heroic self-sacrifice of the first two, who when they had been given the chance had refused to fill their pockets. I knew then that it was an effort worthy of the V.C.

THE *Ladies' Magazine*, the not very attractive title of the new periodical to be issued by Messrs. Pearson next January, will contain the opening chapters of Mr. Hall Caine's new novel, "The Eternal City." It is said that Mr. Hall Caine received £1,500 for the serial rights. Apropos of the subject of prices, we cull the information, from "C. K. S.'s" letter in the *Sphere*, that Miss Marie Corelli has received £5,000 on account of the royalty for her new novel, *The Master Christian*.

MR. HENRY LAWSON, the Australian poet and author, who arrived in London last week, intends making his home in this country.

A BOOK of immediate topical interest is announced by Messrs. Sampson Low: *European Settlements in the Far East*. The compiler has aimed to supply information to the political student, the merchant, and the public generally.

FROM Mr. George Smith's remarks at the Mansion House celebration of *The Dictionary of National Biography* it may be gathered that the production of this great work has cost something like £150,000. Mr. Smith added that he must consider himself fairly fortunate if the return equals half this expenditure. No literary enterprise of such magnitude has been carried out in this country at the cost and initiative of a single individual. Mr. Morley, who proposed the toast of "The Dictionary of National Biography," made a sunny little speech, in the course of which he said (we quote the *Daily News* report):

Everybody knew that beautiful picture, not meant to be a picture, that Gibbon drew—how he walked under the acacias when he had finished his great work. Those who had produced this Dictionary did not walk under acacias, they lunched with the Lord Mayor. He believed, however, that they shared some of the regrets with which Gibbon parted from his immortal work. He himself had contributed only one article to this titanic Dictionary—the biography of a statesman who, he was told, though he did not accept it, was more dead than any other in the whole catalogue, and that was Cobden. As to scale and proportion, from Mr. Lee's famous study of Shakespeare—Mr. Firth's masterly article on Cromwell, Mr. Stephen's contributions—Burke and Swift, for example—to any others of the 30,000 subjects, the distribution of space must always be a matter open to argument. With regard to omissions, he was told that someone who was the possessor of "Boxiana" thought the prize ring had been very inadequately dealt with. Mr. Lee had adopted the principle that malefactors—and the character of a malefactor must always be very much a question of degree—because of the permanent interest they excited in the human mind, deserved a space scarcely inferior to that given to benefactors. He regretted that in this gallery they did not have Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and Franklin. These were all British subjects. When the Dictionary was commenced, he could have wished that Mr. Smith had made it a dictionary of universal biography, but he saw now that Mr. Smith had been right in confining the task to national biography, and he was glad the work was "national," and was not called by some other words that were more in fashion at the present day.

THE Statistical Account of *The Dictionary of National Biography* appended to the last volume contains some curious information. The table of memoirs arranged century by century may be summarised as follows:

Memoirs.		Memoirs.	
Fifth century ...	36	Thirteenth century ...	515
Sixth century ...	81	Fourteenth century ...	678
Seventh century ...	134	Fifteenth century ...	659
Eighth century ...	96	Sixteenth century ...	2,138
Ninth century ...	57	Seventeenth century ...	5,674
Tenth century ...	76	Eighteenth century ...	5,789
Eleventh century ...	186	Nineteenth century ...	12,608
Twelfth century ...	377		
		Total ...	29,104

The deductions which may be drawn from these figures are interesting, especially if the estimated population of the country in each century be taken into consideration. The distribution of the names over the alphabet is also shown, but here it would take a wise man to draw conclusions. The largest number of names appears under the letter B; and this letter is followed by C, S, H, M, P, W, G, &c. The figures for these letters are:

B ...	3,078	M ...	2,310
C ...	2,542	P ...	1,807
S ...	2,420	W ...	1,797
H ...	2,420	G ...	1,490

The fewest names naturally appear under Z, which furnishes 21. X has no name at all to its credit. Q has only 31, and U 75.

THE longest article in the Dictionary is Mr. Sidney Lee's Shakespeare, filling forty-nine pages. It is followed at a distance by the biography of the Duke of Wellington, by Col. E. M. Lloyd, R.G., with thirty-four pages. The next longest biographies are those of Francis Bacon, Oliver Cromwell, Queen Elizabeth, Sir Robert Walpole, the Duke of Marlborough, Sir Walter Scott, Edward I., Byron, Charles II., Newton, Swift, Edward III., Sterne, and Wycliffe. A list of the thirty-four contributors who have written the largest number of pages in the Dictionary starts as follows:

Name.	Amount of Contributions in pages.	Amount of Contributions reckoned in volumes.	No. of Articles.
Mr. Sidney Lee.....	1,370	Three volumes	820
Prof. J. K. Laughton...	1,000	Two and a quarter	904
Mr. Leslie Stephen	1,000	Two and a quarter	378
Mr. T. F. Henderson ...	900	Two	918
Mr. Thompson Cooper..	900	Two	1,422
Rev. William Hunt.....	830	Two	595

Perhaps the proudest fact in the statistics is that the number of biographies in the Dictionary is far in excess of the number in the National Biography of any other country.

THE new *Anglo-Saxon Review* is an average number, in a cover of more than average gorgeousness. Best among its contents we like Mr. John Davidson's "Eclogue of the Downs." There are three speakers: Lucian, Urban, and Eustace; and they walk over the Downs and talk, as men will, about fate and the meaning of life. Their walk takes them

Under Erringham,
By Thundersbarrow Hill, through Mossy Bottom,
Past Crooked Moon and over Thorleigh Top,
Behind the tree-shorn Downs, by Small Dole, Beeding,
Bramber, and on to Steyning, where we dine.

The more serious passages, which are full of vitality, are relieved by delightful descriptions of the sights and sounds of the walk. The friends come to a hamlet, which consists of "a forge, a store, Three dwelling-houses, and a wayside inn." They taste the Sussex ale, and with it drink the silence.

EUSTACE.

The wind has fallen; not a whisper stirs
The brimming silence; earth, enchanted, waits
A counter-spell.

URBAN.

I love that litter, strewn
About the stithy yard; machines and ploughs;
Old toothless harrows; rollers, rusty, cracked,
And clotted o'er with tell-tale soil; wheel-tyres
Of sorts in bunches on the gable: all
Reposeful, genial, and luxurious.

EUSTACE.

A prying woman opens a door and peeps—
But not at us, she makes believe. She turns;
She hesitates; she saunters purposeless,
Then grasps her gown foothold across the way,
And punctuates the silence so.

URBAN.

A smothered, gurgling sound; a scarf of smoke
Hangs out upon the chimney-stalk! The bellows
Coughs and rumbles, sooty cobwebs blown
To tatters in its throat.

The assembled starlings scold
In budding tree-tops; and the brazen catch
And madrigal of fifty chanticleers
In fifty farms responds and dwindles wide
From knoll to knoll round Chanctonbury Ring,
That copes with sable crest the silvery air.

AN American poet, Mr. Robert Loveman, very sensibly calls his poems *A Book of Verses*. That is the ideal title for the volume of a "minor" poet, and there is no reason why every "minor" poet should not use it, the author's name being thus made the sufficient and appropriate distinction. The title—or description, for it is really no more—has derived dignity from its adoption by Mr. Henley.

A WORK of great importance to those who are interested in the art and history of typography has just been issued by the Clarendon Press. This is *Notes on a Century of Typography at the University Press, Oxford, 1693-1794*, with annotations and appendixes by Mr. Horace Hart, printer to the University. Only one hundred and fifty copies have been issued. The book, which we shall notice hereafter, is a large square quarto, and is nobly equipped in all respects. It displays all the various types which, between the above dates, were in use at Oxford, and of which specimen imprints were issued to authors in order that they might select the type in which their works were to be printed.

In the new *Cornhill* Mr. Bernard Capes generously gives away—we presume he gives them away—nine plots of novels which he has not had the time or will to work out. They are mostly of the fantastic order. "The Plot of the Abhorred Couple" and "The Plot of the Fearful Head" are effective in the gruesome line. There are three Plots of Lost and Recovered Treasures and two Plots of Mysterious Deaths, and there is "The Plot of the Phenomenal Calculator and the Quantity Surveyor." Perhaps the most amusingly tragic plot is that of "The Dead Cook Under the Coal Shoot," which we will quote:

One morning is found, lying under the open circular shoot of a coal cellar beneath the pavement, the dead body of the general servant to a family living in a quiet street of a quiet suburb. She had evidently gone in the early morning to fetch coals. . . . Her scalp is abraded, her neck dislocated. The pavement in the immediate neighbourhood of the orifice is slightly spattered with blood. . . . It would seem that the crown of the victim's head was, when assailed, actually projected, sprouting like a red tulip bud from the pavement. Now, it is the very character of the injuries that baffles inquisition; for the damage to the scalp is superficial, and insufficient to account for the spilt blood, as in evidence. Moreover, even a red-haired cook will not allow her neck to be broken without a struggle, and here there was no sign of the occurrence of any. So again we set our illuminati to work; and this is the solution of the mystery as they interpret it: a circus company is leaving the neighbourhood in the early morning. A young elephant—one of certain animals conducted through the empty streets—becoming either scared or skittish, breaks from the ranks and scuttles along the side-walk. Mary Jane . . . hearing strange sounds, essays to project her inquisitive knowledge-box through the aperture, and has only got so far as to bung the latter, when the elephant shuffles up, and, unthinking, puts a foot upon the sprouting bulb, as upon a mere eccentricity of the pavement. Down goes Mary Jane, shutting upon herself, between the elephant and the coal, with a scratched scalp and a dislocated neck; and down also goes the animal's foot, wedging itself in the hole. And here it is, in the beast's frantic struggles to withdraw its limb, that the skin thereof is frayed and the blood scattered. (Note by illuminati: diameter of blood corpuscle in man, 3,300th of an inch; of an elephant, 2,745th of an inch.)

This story, well worked out, would have sped a railway journey.

"Does anyone now read Mrs. Radcliffe?" asks Mr. Andrew Lang in an article on this novelist in the same magazine. Apparently people do, or did until recently, for Mr. Lang says:

The thick double-columned volume in which I peruse the works of the Enchantress belongs to a public library. It is quite the dirtiest, greasiest, most dog's-eared, and most bescribbled tome in the collection. Many of the books have remained during the last hundred years uncut even to this day, and I have had to apply the paper knife to many an author, from Alciphron (1790) to Mr. Max Müller, and Dr. Birkbeck Hill's edition of *Bozzy's Life of Dr. Johnson*. But Mrs. Radcliffe has been read diligently, and copiously annotated.

Concerning Mrs. Radcliffe's novel, *The Sicilian Romance*, Mr. Lang has this suggestive and, we think, perfectly correct note:

The Sicilian Romance appeared in 1790, when the author's age was twenty-six. The book has a treble attraction, for it contains the germ of *Northanger Abbey* and the germ of *Jane Eyre* and—the germ of Byron! Like *Joseph Andrews*, *Northanger Abbey* began as a parody (of Mrs. Radcliffe), and developed into a real novel of character. So, too, Byron's gloomy scowling adventurers, with their darkling past, are mere repetitions in rhyme of Mrs. Radcliffe's Schedoni. This is so obvious that, when discussing Mrs. Radcliffe's Schedoni, Scott adds in a note parallel passages from Byron's *Giaour*. Sir Walter did not mean to mock, he merely compared two kindred spirits. "The noble poet" "kept on the business still," and broke into octosyllabics, borrowed from Scott, his descriptions of miscreants borrowed from Mrs. Radcliffe.

MR. A. H. MILLAR's recent attack on the Omar Khayyám craze has its Transatlantic counterpart in an article by Mr. Edgar Fawcett in the *New York Journal*. This writer contends that the Omar Khayyám "fad" takes its place in a long line of English fads and fevers connected with Turgenev, Browning, Masterlinck, and others. All these fads, says Mr. Fawcett, are dead or dying, and the Omar fad will die too, and the sooner the better; it has shown up "the hypocrisy of English ethics." Mr. Fawcett describes Omar's philosophy as follows:

Omar was not only a religious infidel, but he was a sensualist at whom Epicurus, not to mention Horace, would have shuddered. Yet he has been made the fashion, and that is enough for people to bow before him in silliest reverence. The professed lovers of Omar include Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Christians of almost every type. Ingersoll, that noble and honest thinker, never dreamed of such ruffian heterodoxy as this Persian *bon vivant* has literally reeled off by the yard, nor did the great dead agnostic whom I have just named ever once descend to the shallowness of Omar's utterance. It is all, when regarded seriously, the most pitiable stuff. Commonplace is no word for it, since it merely decorates the obvious in wine-drenched garlands and tawdry spangles. "Eat and drink, for to-morrow you die," does not express its dull grossness. "Get drunk as often as you can, and stay so as long as you can, for there's nothing in life half so profitable," sounds its true note.

It is to be observed here, as in Mr. Millar's case, that no distinction appears to be made between the half-legendary Omar and the very real FitzGerald. To say of FitzGerald's rendering that "commonplace is no word for it" would be crass stupidity; and yet the "fad" denounced in such unmeasured terms has grown up precisely round that rendering, which, to all intents and purposes, is a modern self-existing poem. We agree that the term "fad" is not misplaced: the Omar cult has been in many respects a ridiculous episode; and there is little doubt that before long FitzGerald's poem will once more be read by the fit and few. But to lash oneself into a fury over its philosophy is to establish one's unfitness to read it at all. Omar's "jug of wine" is not the same thing as the public-house round the corner.

St. Nicholas's examination papers for children have often a literary flavour. This month the young people are asked the following questions—the prize for the best answers being a year's subscription to the magazine:

- Who wrote "Goody Two Shoes"?
- Where was Robinson Crusoe's island?
- Which is stronger, a lion or a tiger? Which is the braver animal?
- What book was first printed in England?
- What is the origin of the expression, "N. or M.," in the Catechism?
- What is the meaning of "viz."? What is its origin?
- Who was "A. L. O. E."? Who was "The Country Parson"?

THE *American Bookman* of July has these remarks on scenery and weather in fiction:

We are quite convinced that in ninety-nine out of every one hundred novels, when the author turns from narrative or dialogue to a description of the surrounding forest, or of the nearby pool, or of the "tall Corinthian pillars of the stately old southern home," or of the hazy blue mountains in the distance, he or she is simply making so many lines of utterly meaningless words. This sort of padding is the most convenient and the easiest in the whole repertory of the third-rate craftsman or craftswoman.

Comparing elaborate with simple effects in this kind of writing, the critic goes on to say:

Dickens, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, devotes several pages to the description of autumn leaves being driven before the wind. It is a wonderful bit of word-painting; Taine has quoted it as an example of the poetic qualities of the great English writer; and still we venture to say that one might read over *Martin Chuzzlewit* for the tenth time, and yet we do not think that anyone ever read and loved *The History of Henry Emond*, and did not always remember that when Henry went back to Castlewood, after his first bitter experience with the great world, and walked by his Lady's side the night of that 29th of December, that "the moon was up and glittering clear in the frosty sky." It is the simplest and briefest touch . . . and yet it is that touch which makes the picture so effective and complete.

There is truth in these remarks; but the subject is complex. An article on "Scenery in Fiction" would have to go much deeper to be of value.

Bibliographical.

WILL Mr. Lang's magazine article on Mrs. Radcliffe's novels do anything towards creating a demand for them, I wonder? I believe I am correct in saying that the latest occasion on which one of that lady's romances was reprinted was in 1891, when a London firm brought out a cheap edition of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Previously to that we had had, in 1887, a cheap reprint of *The Romance of the Forest*, and in 1884 a cheap reproduction of *The Italian*. Evidently, therefore, there are still people who read Mrs. Radcliffe, although it is many a year since Haynes Bayly had the effrontery to say of her that "past were her terrible touches"—she who had once been

the charmer
Of girls who sat reading all night.

Of one thing we may be tolerably sure, and that is, that we are not likely to have a reprint, cheap or otherwise, of Mrs. Radcliffe's *Poems*, which seem to have seen the light for the first time in 1834. And yet the good lady prided herself upon her verses, and introduced sundry of them into her stories—notably into *The Romance of the Forest*—which contains a quite pretty little song (albeit exceeding sentimental), beginning:

The rose that weeps with morning dew,
and so forth.

Attention may be drawn to the paper in the new *Anglo-Saxon Review* in which that versatile lady, the Countess of

Warwick, discourses of "Some Minor Miseries of a Book-Lover." Lady Warwick's warnings against the borrower and the marginal commentator are, of course, familiar; but there is suggestiveness in her remarks on methods of cataloguing, and her proposal for a vertical instead of horizontal arrangement of different-sized tomes on the same subject has something to recommend it. Her protests against inadequate binding, uncut leaves, and the inclusion in a book of its publisher's trade catalogue, will no doubt have sympathisers. There is, however, much to be said for, as well as against, uncut leaves and the publisher's catalogue. The latter is often of great value bibliographically. As for her ladyship's hint that some of the attendants in the British Museum Reading-room might well be women, I fear that this passage in her paper will shake the Museum to its foundations. The lady attendants would need to be over fifty years of age, at the very least. Some ladies under fifty are "distinctly comely," and one goes to the Reading-room to read—at least, some do. And about the regulation concerning "no conversation": is there such a thing as "a silent woman"?

Mr. Frederick Hawkins, of the *Times*, whose death has just been announced, will live in library catalogues, and also in the minds of those who are interested in theatrical history, as the author of *A Life of Edmund Kean*, published in 1869, and of four volumes on the French theatre, entitled respectively *Annals of the French Stage* (2 vols., 1884) and *The French Stage in the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., 1888). The two latter works are accurate in their information and pleasing in their style. They are likely to remain standard authorities for some time to come. On the other hand, the definitive *Life of Edmund Kean* has yet to be written, despite the attempts made, not only by Mr. Hawkins, but by Sheridan Knowles, Barry Cornwall, and, in these present days, Mr. Fitzgerald Molloy. It is worth noting that Mr. Hawkins wrote a good deal in the *Theatre* magazine (which he edited at two different periods of its career), often anonymously, and often pseudonymously, masquerading most frequently as "Frédéric O'Keene."

The new Professor of English Literature at Glasgow, Mr. Walter Raleigh, has not yet contributed very much to that literature himself. He first came to the fore in 1894 with a little manual on *The English Novel*. Then he gave us, in 1896, a small brochure on Robert Louis Stevenson, and, in 1897, a booklet on *Style* and an introduction to some poems of Keats. At Glasgow, as at Edinburgh, there is a truly long vacation, and Mr. Raleigh should have leisure by and by to add to the number of his publications.

I see that one of the critics, reviewing *Mrs. Jeremie Didlere*, by H. J. Jennings, refers to its author as "she." Now, this particular H. J. Jennings may be a "she"; but I should think it more likely that the author of *Mrs. Jeremie Didlere* is identical with the Mr. H. J. Jennings, journalist, of Birmingham, who wrote a little book on the *Curiosities of Criticism* (1881) and monographs on Tennyson and Manning. If I am right, Mr. Jennings now has another curiosity of criticism to add to his store.

Talking of Mr. Lang, one is reminded that a certain ballad of his is likely, before very long, to get out of date. "I am not in *Men of the Time*," sang Mr. Lang some years ago, in accents of humorous regret; and now one hears that *Men of the Time* is to be incorporated in its more youthful and more "modern" rival, *Who's Who*, in which, of course, Mr. Lang has duly found a place.

The title of Mr. Churton Collins's forthcoming book—*Plain Truths about Current Literature*—recalls that of the *Modern Men of Letters Honestly Criticised* of the late Mr. Hain Friswell. That work landed Mr. Friswell in a well-remembered action for libel. Let us hope that, with that fact before him, Mr. Collins will not make his "Truths" too "plain."

THE BOOKWORM.

Reviews.

An Ancient Literature.

A History of Sanskrit Literature. By Arthur A. Macdonnell. (Heinemann.)

THIS handy volume (one of the "Short Histories of the Literature of the World," edited by Mr. Edmund Gosse) is intended by its author to supply, and undoubtedly does supply, a conspicuous want. There is no history of Indian literature to which the general reader can turn. There was, indeed, lately published a *Literary History of India*; but that included in its scope Indian history in its bearing upon literature, and involved, therefore, a mass of information with which the purely literary inquirer could well dispense. As a further distinction, the present volume is confined to Sanskrit literature, while that embraced the literature of Southern India down to Tamil and the vernacular literatures generally. Mr. Macdonnell has produced a handbook which will be indispensable to readers unacquainted with the Sanskrit tongue, and valuable also to the less advanced student of that language for its scholarly qualities, its clearness, precision, and accurate knowledge. We have just one cavil to make—a cavil with regard to proportion. The book is fullest just where we might have expected it pardonably to have been somewhat condensed—with regard to the Vedic literature of early India; it is rather regrettably condensed where we should have looked for it to be, if anywhere, over-full—in respect of classical Sanskrit literature. It is a quite modern failing. Fifty years ago a history of our own literature would have slipped gaily over early English letters to reserve its space for the period from Elizabeth down to Tennyson. Now it is odds your author will so zealously cram his readers with the latest research on Cædmon and Beowulf that the writers from Burns onward are of necessity packed like sardines in layers. It was well that the Vedas, and specially the Rig-Veda, should have the emphasis due to their poetic quality and literary importance. But it may be matter for question whether the Brahmanas should have received such intimate analysis; and surely to extend equally intimate treatment even to the Sûtras, leaving classical Sanskrit for summary (though careful) handling in about the final third of the book is an error of proportion. Doubtless to the scholar such treatment commends itself; he has presumably a certain familiarity with classical Sanskrit, and can be content with outline, leaving the fuller treatment for the more recently explored Vedic literature. But the general reader (to whom this book is largely addressed) knows no more of *Sakuntalâ* than of the Rig-Veda. To meet his necessities, the handling should be strictly proportioned to the artistic quality and literary greatness of the works handled. Such, at least, is our preconception.

Sanskrit, as Mr. Macdonnell explains, was always very much of a literary tongue—at least as used in literature—the peculiar property of the Brahmins or priestly caste; sown with archaisms and in classical times with lengthy compound-words. At the present day it holds much the position of Latin in the Middle Ages—a learned language, spoken and written by learned Brahmins. It has a rich and scientific phonetic alphabet, of no less than forty-six letters. It was formerly written on birch-bark or palm-leaves—northern India using ink, southern India the stylus. Its most ancient monuments are the Vedas, of which we need only here concern ourselves with the first, or Rig-Veda—the others being successive adaptations of it to the purpose of the sacrificial ritual. The Rig-Veda is a mighty collection of hymns to the early gods of Brahmanism. The pseudo-Orphic hymns of Greece furnish a certain parallel. But the Rig-Veda extends to no less than 1,028 hymns, arranged in ten books. And, apart from its literary merit (which is very considerable), it is a treasury of information concerning the religion and

customs of the early Hindus. This, be it remembered, was over three thousand years ago—a uniquely early literary record. The poetic value of the Rig-Veda (which alone concerns the ACADEMY) reaches often a high point, though we may discount considerably the raptures of scholars. The Indian fancy is fertile, and notably in the Rig-Veda. The Indian sense of form is almost *nil*, and notably in the Rig-Veda. Fancy runs riot without rein or proportion. Passion in the higher senses is not pre-eminently an Indian gift, and it is notably absent in the Rig-Veda. At the same time these hymns have a directness lacking in later poetry. They display in profusion the myth-making faculty applied to Nature which is the characteristic of early poets and of Shelley, who had drunk deep at the fountain of Hellenism. Of Shelley we constantly think in turning these opening pages of Mr. Macdonnell. Natural facts are tissue into a hundred forms of imagery and personification, pass through transformation upon transformation. But it is a Shelley of less beauty, without the radiant loveliness, more often merely ingenious, more often (it must be said) merely commonplace or trivial, too often ugly fantastic.

Passing to classical Sanskrit literature, we are in a later era, beginning about 500 B.C. The gods of the Rig-Veda have become lesser deities; Brahma, Vishnu, Lakshmi (the Hindoo Aphrodite), Siva and his spouse Kali Durga, are the chief of the new hierarchy. Legendary epic succeeds religious hymns in the shape of the *Mahâbhârata*. We can but briefly mention here this portentous and truly Hindu epic. It has not, nor can ever be, translated in any true sense. For it is an epic for the days of Hilpa and Shalum, a poem such as only the suns of India could breed to its "strange overgrowth." It reaches over two hundred thousand lines, and over one hundred thousand *stokas* or stanzas. The kernel is the exterminating battle between the Kurus and Pândus; but around this has accumulated a monstrous accretion of didactic matter and episodes interminable. When the hero Arjuna hesitates to fight, a sage, by way of telling him a hortatory and encouraging story, relates a whole philosophic poem in eighteen cantos, the *Bhagavadgîtâ*. Imagine an epic on the plan of the *Arabian Nights*, and you have something like an idea of this great, but impossible, Hindu poem. More manageable, but still of great length, is the *Râmâyana* of Valmiki, which relates the wanderings, love, and adventures of the deified hero Râma, and his final restoration to the throne whence he had been exiled. More polished and literary in style than the older epic, it anticipates the purely literary epics which followed, under the name of *Kavyas*. It is the most popular of Hindoo epics, and has undoubted beauty. With the *Kavyas* blossomed also Sanskrit drama and lyric poetry. The greatest name in all three is that of Kalidasa. His *Megadhûtâ* or "Cloud-Messenger" is a lyric which Goethe loved, addressed by an exiled lover to the cloud sailing north towards the land where his mistress dwells.

But the fame of Kalidasa is highest as the foremost of Indian dramatists—above all, as the author of "*Sakuntalâ*"—or "*Çakuntalâ*," as Mr. Macdonnell writes it. "*Çakuntalâ*" is the one great Sanskrit poem which has penetrated all over Europe. Goethe, the impeccable, admired it as a masterpiece; it has been once, if not twice, acted in Paris of late years. It deserves its fame, yet it is not possible, by description or quotation, to give any idea of it to English readers. The plot is nothing, and very Indian—the loves of a warrior king and a nymph, forest-trained; thwarted for a time through the curse of an extremely holy ascetic with an extremely unholy temper, whom Çakuntalâ offended, because, thinking of her lover, she did not bestir herself promptly to afford him hospitality. Loss of memory falls on the king, owing to Çakuntalâ's loss of her spousal-ring (magic is rife in the play), and he turns her away unrecognised. But the ring is found in a fish's belly and brought to the king, who at once regains

memory; sets out to seek Çakuntalā; and, after a little adventure, is reunited to her. There is scarce more than this in the play, which is, consequently, undramatic enough as regards action. The charm lies in the tender, voluptuous passion, the subdued melancholy, the rich lyric fancy, and descriptive setting. The breath of the Indian forest, the odour of lotus, the glow of tropical blossoms, pervade the drama, and make it haunting to the reader, however little he may care for the abundant supernatural machinery; and the Hindu deities have nothing of Greek charm and imposingness. Mr. Macdonnell is not happy in the few selections of verse scattered through this book, and he is specially inadequate as regards Çakuntalā. Therefore, we quote from another source a very free rendering of a passage which, if not representative, has, nevertheless, its own grace of fancy. It should be explained that the king has forbidden the celebration of the spring festival; and some girls are found by his chamberlain culling garlands in despite of the prohibition. They plead their ignorance of the edict:

MAIDENS.

Pardon, good sir, we have heard nought of it.

CHAMBERLAIN.

You have heard nought of it? Why, all the trees,
The vernal hedgerows, yea, the very birds
That have therein their leafy tenement,
The king's behest attend more heedfully.
Yon mango-blossoms, though long since at full,
Gather no down upon their tender tops;
The duteous amaranth hesitates to bud;
The cuckoo, though frore winter's rains are past,
Falters in act of dewy utterance.
Nay, to his quiver intimidated Love
Thrusts back the half-drawn shaft.

To pursue further Kalidasa's plays, or the rich Indian theatre in general, is impossible within our limits. It has many curious affinities to the Elizabethan drama—the mixture of prose and verse, of serious and comic, even the conventional presence of the court-jester who always accompanies the hero. Nor is Kalidasa's undramatic quality common to the drama as a whole. Let us, by way of conclusion, quote a lovely image from a play ascribed (probably falsely) to King Çriharsha. It describes the pale light before the rising of the moon:

Behold, the east proclaims the god of night,
Still hidden by the mountain where he rises,
Even as a maiden by her pale face shows
That in her inmost heart a lover dwells.

The philosophic and prose portion of Sanskrit literature we have not touched. But from our quite cursory survey of the poetic portion, it will be gathered how wide and rich is the material we have perforce left unnoted.

Under the Wing of Maeterlinck.

The Cave of Illusion: a Play in Four Acts. By Alfred Sutro. With an Introduction by Maurice Maeterlinck. (Grant Richards. 3s. 6d.)

IN the brilliant and beautiful essay which precedes Mr. Sutro's play in this volume, M. Maeterlinck tries to account for the present decadence of dramatic poetry. He attributes it to science, which, he says in effect, while offering a few definitive certitudes, has rendered impracticable certain incertitudes, and precisely those in which the loftiest thought flourished. Great poetry, he decides, has three principal elements: first, verbal beauty; second, the contemplation and passionate painting of nature and our feelings; third (and most important), the poet's "idea of the unknown, in which float the beings and the things evoked, of the mystery which dominates and judges these beings and these things, and presides over their destinies."

It is this last element which science has so fatally disturbed, and which only time can reconstitute. The theory is worked out with considerable ingenuity and penetration; but M. Maeterlinck appears to us to have failed in his endeavour to explain why dramatic poetry has been taken and other kinds of poetry left.

We have not perceived any close connexion between the preface and Mr. Sutro's play, which, by the way, the essayist praises very highly. *The Cave of Illusion* seems to M. Maeterlinck to be "from many points of view the almost perfect type of the best modern drama." We have the greatest respect for M. Maeterlinck's critical powers, but we are bound to disagree with him in this pronouncement. *The Cave of Illusion* is an interesting play, a carefully-written play, a clever play; but the despised dramatists of our West-end theatres have assuredly written better. In fact, except that it ends unhappily—or, rather, does not end at all, but merely leaves off—Mr. Sutro's play would make quite a marketable product, and might run a couple of hundred nights. It decidedly has four of the essentials of a popular stage success—verbal smartness, a luxurious setting, footmen, and an absence of new, disconcerting ideas.

Mr. Sutro takes a theme, long since antique and trite in fiction—that of the author with a dowdy wife who finds his inspiration in the misunderstood spouse of an opulent Philistine. David Hollisdaile, the hero, figures already in a hundred novels. Mr. Sutro surely has not observed him at first hand. Mr. Sutro would have us believe that Hollisdaile is a literary artist of genuine and striking talent, yet the fellow must needs read his work chapter by chapter to his Gabrielle under pain of not being able to continue it. Imagine a real distinguished author in that plight! Imagine a real distinguished author talking like this:

DAVID.

Of course you are glad! I have been wandering about since I left you, perplexed and disconsolate; I couldn't go home. And I lay on the grass, and half closed my eyes, and it came! And I couldn't resist the desire to come back here and tell you. Such a trifle, you know—a mere touch—but it makes all the difference! And do you know where the great flaw is? Just listen—it's wonderful—it—

[He pulls out a notebook and opens it.]

And like this:

DAVID.

Hear me too! Of myself I say nothing—but there is my work, which is your work too! . . . For you have awakened a force in me—a power—without you I am nothing; I fall to the ground.

GABRIELLE.

You imagine all this. . . .

DAVID.

Till I met you I worked as other men work; but now—I feel—I feel—oh, do not regard me as merely a braggart or fool—but since you have let me come here, day by day, and see you, and hear you, I have been conscious of—I have had thoughts—oh, I tell you, give me time, give me courage, your sympathy, the light that shines from you, I will do such work that men who know of us both shall fall on their knees for shame of their villainous slanders!

Distinguished authors don't do these things. They pursue their labours in a businesslike manner, so many hundred or thousand words a day, and discuss it as little as possible while it is in progress.

Nor do society women, however noble their spiritual struggles, employ language like the following:

GABRIELLE.

We have much in common. We are both a little bruised by life—we both are sensitive—perhaps we both dream dreams. . . . And I—have you ever gone out after a storm, and seen a flower that has almost been wrenched

from its stem—but the sun comes out, and the warmth and gladness revive it, and it once more struggles to live. . . . I am like that. I am beginning to forget, beginning to hope. Oh be glad of this friend of mine!

Both hero and heroine are unoriginal, not directly derived from life. Hopkinson the publisher is neither more nor less than a stage-publisher. He is so much a stage puppet that one is tempted to ask whether Mr. Sutro has ever seen a publisher, except, perchance, through the spectacles of Sir Walter Besant. Mrs. Mellissent, who supplies the "comic relief," is one of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's women; she might have emerged from "The Liars." Her style runs thus:

MRS. MELLISSENT.

[Holding out her hand.] My dear General—what a delightful surprise! You are usually invisible in the afternoon—they say you devote it to being manicured and having your fortune told. Where is Gabrielle?

[The FOOTMAN returns from the boudoir.]

We have already said that the play has no proper ending. Mr. Sutro states a problem, but he does not solve it. Moreover, he has a tendency to achieve his "curtains" by means of surprises which are far more theatrical than dramatic. This applies to every act, but especially to the last. Gabrielle's cry, at the final moment, that she is expecting a child, comes with a shock; it crudely administers a shudder; it does not, however, simplify or amend the situation; on the contrary, it complicates every difficulty, and calls for at least another act. In making an *impasse* for himself, and then ringing down the curtain, Mr. Sutro has followed a precedent more facile than justifiable.

We have, perhaps, dwelt a little hardly on the defects of *The Case of Illusion*. It has good qualities. It is interesting and often effective, and it contains one admirably-drawn character—that of Clara Hollisdaile. The second act, in which Clara Hollisdaile rules the scene, is distinctly better than the other three. But the play, as a whole, has an air of being "superior." It is not superior: we repeat that it is almost marketable.

Mr. Steevens's Early Work.

Things Seen. By G. W. Steevens. (Blackwood & Sons.)

WE cannot consider Mr. Street well inspired when he chose his title for this volume. So much of the late G. W. Steevens's work comes under the heading "Things Seen" that, when a book is made up largely of his more subjective papers, it seems a pity to furnish it with so objective a label. The first paper is a satirical analysis of the New Humanitarianism, the second paper a clever political adaptation of Gibbon, the fifth a review of Mr. Balfour's philosophy, the sixth a criticism of "Little Eyolf," the seventh a eulogy of Zola, and so forth. The appendix contains some extracts from "that pathetic trophy of indomitable cheerfulness," the *Ladysmith Lyre*, probably the last words that George Steevens wrote. Towards the end of the volume come some *Daily Mail* descriptive sketches, and there is also a good article on the Greek and Turkish war. A better title than "Things Seen" should not have been hard to find.

But the book is more important than the title; and the book is interesting. It was right that these fugitive papers should be collected for the Memorial Edition, of which this is the first volume, for they show the range of his intellectual experiments, and the growth of his mind. The dominant note of this early work is cleverness. It emphasises Steevens's cleverness far more than his later travel sketches did. Contrasting the two, we should say that the distinguishing quality of his later work was intelligence, which is, of course, much better than cleverness.

For one man who could write *With Kitchener to Khartum* or *From Capetown to Ladysmith* or *The Land of the Dollar*, you could find fifty to do such work as the reflective portion of this volume. Not so well, perhaps; not so incisively, so brilliantly; but well enough.

This book, indeed, proves how powerful a factor in Steevens's development was Mr. Alfred Harmsworth. It seems to have been Mr. Harmsworth who taught him to feel, or, at any rate, to permit his feeling to get into his work. Before Mr. Harmsworth's democratic influence was cast upon him Steevens was still an undergraduate: of his earlier editors neither Mr. Henley nor Mr. Cust could alter that, although both drew from him occasional articles indicating a wider, more human outlook. Yet it was left for Mr. Harmsworth finally to play the exorcist.

To our mind the best thing in this book—the best thing, that is, of the kind that will be new to the majority of Steevens's readers—is the essay on Zola. Written as long ago as 1893, it contains some of the most understanding criticism that Zola has received in this country. Here is a passage:

There is always the consciousness of abstract truth struggling to assert itself through every one of Zola's men and machines and institutions. It gives all his work a strange kind of perfection, not wholly artistic, but more like the perfection of a system whose fitted parts are all squared and jointed flawlessly. If the system is right, all is right. To come back to *La Débâcle*, what could be more triumphantly relevant and triumphantly true than the figure of the peasant stolidly working his fields among the shells of Sedan? Without the idea it is melodrama—perverse and objectless melodrama. But the idea comes to rescue it—the idea of recuperation in the fact of destruction, the indomitable perpetuity of life, the implicit statement of the law that becomes outspoken with *Le Docteur Pascal*. It is this symmetry and coherence—the constant sense of massive agencies working through all casual actions to which they lend purport and explanation—that gives us leave to call Zola the most ideal of the idealists. The real subject of the *Rougon-Macquart* is eternal truth, its real hero indestructible force.

It is the scientific spirit aflame with poetry. In place of the hopeless struggle to grapple with the monstrous tangle of interests that make up a man to-day, Zola puts the device of taking him by sections at a time and referring him under each section to one of the primitive forces that struggle in the complexity of his nature. He seems to be singing the war-song, not of man but of the impalpable agencies of philosophy. But to tell of philosophies and agencies is none the less to tell of man, whom they form. It is the passion of science, who for once has caught the look of her sister art. That is why Zola is for this one age of science—a wonderful sport in the line of artistic evolution. For if art could only once be science she would die happy. But she would die all the same.

In the same year, and for the same paper, the *National Observer*, Steevens made an experiment in character writing and produced "The Futile Don," of which these are the opening sentences:

He squares his elbows at high-table to the most marvellous of *entrées*; he rolls his eyes in common-room as he gulps the most precious of ports. And the *entrées* twist him with indigestion; the wine laps him in drowsiness. He crouches over his fender in May and catches cold. He guts Mommsen's "Staatsrecht" for his lectures, and cannot decipher his notes. He reads Tennyson, and forgets him in the very crisis of quotation. He talks of this and that, but pre-eminently of this. He walks round Godstow or Trumpington, panting and snatching short steps like a girl. He kneels down in chapel, covering his face with his hands to shut out the undergraduates, and prays God to be delivered from all heresy and schism. You would docket him as the pattern of important futility. And all the while he is dead.

It was that kind of thing which the demands of the *Daily Mail* was to stamp out. Not that such a study was not clever; but it was possibly not worth doing.

We have from time to time written so much about Steevens's special correspondence, that we say no more on this occasion; but his gifts in this direction are well represented in *Things Seen*. Many people will probably be glad to have the volume if only for his record of the Diamond Jubilee.

To Mr. Henley's biographical sketch of Steevens we have already referred. It is a warm-hearted, generous piece of writing, such as only Mr. Henley could have done.

"The Light that Never Was."

Pausanias, and Other Greek Sketches. By J. G. Frazer. (Macmillan. 5s.)

THIS is the promised and welcome offshoot of Mr. Frazer's great commentary on Pausanias, who was the topographer of Greece when Greece was disrobing herself of her last vestments of glory and beauty. The preservation of his *Description of Greece*, written in the second century of our era, is one of the most felicitous facts in all literature, and Mr. Frazer's commentary is a work of which our own age may be proud. Indeed, the word commentary seems inadequate to describe a work which does not merely criticise and annotate Pausanias, but envelops it, so to speak, in modern thought, and by a supreme effort throws it into a perspective that starts from our own day. Pausanias looked back many centuries as he trod the Sacred Way, and lingered on the banks of Ilyssus. We are taught in these pages to look back not only on these, but on Pausanias the melancholy antiquarian—the Howitt of his day. Like Howitt, Pausanias was an ordinary writer. Mr. Frazer tells us he was "a man made of common stuff and cast in a common mould." He had the antiquarian nose. His beliefs and doubts were those calculated to give to his narrative sympathy and piquancy. The gods and the oracles were accepted by him, but not the hundred heads of the hydra, and not the transformation of Zeus into a cuckoo to win the love of Hera. His whole standpoint and mental equipment are worked out by Mr. Frazer in his biographical sketch, which, with Mr. Frazer's own travel notes in the footsteps of Pausanias, forms the substance of this book. Pausanias' pages distil unconscious poetry; Mr. Frazer collects it. The pure colours of the ancient world, the music of undying names, the sparkle of seas that roll for ever in the light of history and legend—Pausanias sees these things, and writes of them in an average, placid, topographical strain; but like jewels in the hand of a dull dealer, they assert their liquidity of everlasting light. Like an antiquary, he is pre-occupied with the Past; but his Past was one of immortal interest. Illustrating his method, Mr. Frazer says:

If he looks up at the mountains, it is not to mark the snowy peaks in the sunlight against the blue, or the sombre pine-forests that fringe their crests and are mirrored in the dark lake below; it is to tell you that Zeus or Apollo or the Sun-god is worshipped on their tops, that the Thyiad women rave on them above the clouds, or that Pan has been heard piping in their lonely coombs. The gloomy caverns, where the sunbeams hardly penetrate, with their fantastic stalactites and dripping roofs, are to him the haunts of Pan and the nymphs. The awful precipices of the Aroanian mountains, in the sunless crevices of which the snow-drifts never melt, would have been passed by him in silence were it not that the water that trickles down their dark glistening face is the water of Styx. If he describes the smooth, glassy pool which, bordered by reeds and tall grasses, still sleeps under the shadow of the shivering poplars in the Lernean swamp, it is because the way to hell goes down through its black unfathomed water. If he stops by murmuring stream or brimming river, it is to relate how from the banks of the Ilyssus, where she was at play, the North Wind carried off Orithyia to be his bride; how the Selenus had been of

old a shepherd who loved a sea-nymph and died forlorn how the amorous Alpheus still flows across the wide and stormy Adriatic to join his love at Syracuse. If in summer he crosses a parched river-bed, where not a dribble of water is oozing, where the stones burn under foot and dazzle the eye by their white glare, he will tell you that this is the punishment the river suffers for having offended the sea-god. Distant prospects, again, are hardly remarked by him, except for the sake of some historical or legendary association. The high knoll which juts out from the rugged side of Mount Maenalus into the dead flat of the Mantinean plain was called the Look, he tells us, because here the dying Epaminondas, with his hand pressed hard on the wound from which his life was ebbing fast, took his long last look at the fight. The view of the sea from the Acropolis at Athens is noticed by him, not for its gleam of molten sapphire, but because from this height the aged Ægeus scanned the blue expanse for the white sails of his returning son, then cast himself headlong from the rock when he descried the bark with sable sails steering for the port of Athens.

The man who has no Greek, but who longs to know the old Greek world, and bathe his heart in its pieties and laughter, should place this book on his shelves. Keats had but Lemprière's Dictionary.

Country Humours.

Village Notes. By Pamela Tennant. (Heinemann.)

WE have here the kind of book which every leisurely observer in the country should attempt to write—a book setting forth the little peculiarities and humours, quaintnesses and beauties of one's simpler neighbours. We do not mean to suggest that the task is easy; indeed, it is very hard; but the effort is worth making, even if Mrs. Tennant's sympathetic vision and literary skill are never attained to. It is impossible to know too much about human nature—especially, perhaps, on its tenderer side—and little books of this class add to our knowledge very pleasantly. Old Anthony, the Wiltshire cowman, for example, is a real "find." This is old Anthony on humanness:

"Noa! I says them as can be onkind to the creaturs, well! I can't understand 'em. Po'r dumb animals! With the way they get to know who's friends. Ha! Knowing? Why, look at old Mary there; so soon as ever she hear me outside the shed if she doesn't begin to coo and chatter! And knew who it was afore ever I come in at the door!" Then, in a voice of unutterable tenderness, "Dormed old 'oman!"

And this was his comment on the morning after a fox had been in the chickens' run:

"Oh! nothing'll do for 'ee till the hounds come. That's what he wants—comen and killen my fowls, and not so much as taking 'em away wi' 'un. Brazen creatur! If I didn't hear him a-yoppin' round the fowl-house all last night, and the fowls to-day all skeered and humpy. Ha! There'll nothing do for 'ee till the hounds come. Brazen everlastin' nuisance!"

Mrs. Tennant tells us also of a gardener who described chaffinches as "they little chinks"—a very pretty poetical nickname.

Here is another glimpse of countryside comedy:

A few friends had assembled at the small house with the beautiful garden, and the midday meal had reached its second course, when Miss Tripp's voice was raised in querulous tone, speaking to her niece. "Mary," it said, "I've a feelin' o' cold pudden' about me. I've a feelin' o' cold pudden' about me, Mary."

The niece, rising from her chair, began a search among the ample folds of the black silk dress. And in some crease the errant scrap was discovered and removed. All those present breathed more freely. But they were not to be let off so easily. Miss Tripp, comfortable once more

and smiling, drew her chair nearer to the table, adding, with the air of one alluding to a common experience of humanity: "Howsoever, it's no so bad as a spuinful o' jam behind the brooch!"

Mrs. Tennant's pages remind us very agreeably of a little book which we think it extremely unlikely that she has ever seen. Indeed, very few persons have seen it, for it was privately printed, in a minute edition, many years ago, and the existing copies must be exceedingly rare. The title is *Country Conversations*, and the book records the humours of a Derbyshire (or Shropshire?) village as they came under the notice of the author—an invalid lady who was able to do a little visiting, and who, on returning home, set down as closely as might be the things that she had heard. This lady was not only a humorist, but a literary artist, and the little book was a treasure. We wish that permission to quote from it were obtainable.

Mrs. Tennant's *Village Notes* is not all quaint sayings. There are reflective chapters, too, and a few admirable descriptive passages. Best of these is, perhaps, the following account of a calf and its mother:

When I went into the cowshed the red calf was being loosed for his evening meal. "You see, I lets him go first; then I takes what's left," said the cowman. And the calf dived into his mother, and became an excited and skittling tail. He gazed back at me with a large soft eye set round with astounding eyelashes; then returned to his meal, his mild mouth in an innocent lather of milky froth. The stable was warm, quiet, and sweet-smelling; a store of summer in the hay. I heard the deep, contented breaths of the cows, the drop of the wooden ball and halter through the ring. And the cheerful and melodious sport of the milk rang out in the clean pails.

We commend the book heartily, and we trust that it may have the effect of bringing into the light of day some of the many other village records which, we doubt not, are at this moment reposing in the security of MS.

A word must be said for the very charming photographs with which Mrs. Tennant's book is embellished.

Russia's Road to Peking.

The "Overland" to China. By Archibald R. Colquhoun. (Harper & Brothers. 16s.)

AMONG those who know the Far East Mr. Archibald Colquhoun is pre-eminent. He has already travelled in, and written on, the Middle Kingdom, and his new volume, which appears at the psychological moment, is a proof of his intelligent anticipation of the course of events. In 1898 the collapse of China before Japan, the near completion of the Siberian Railway, and the appearance of the United States as a colonising power in the Western Pacific, convinced Mr. Colquhoun that great things were brewing in China, and that the time had arrived for him to furbish up his knowledge of the Far East. He therefore started from St. Petersburg, and traversed European Russia and Siberia by rail as far as the temporary terminus on Lake Baikal. Thence he struck south-east by tarantass and camel cart across the Great Desert of Gobi to Peking; then from Peking to Tientsin by the road which Admiral Seymour has just failed to force, and so by sea to Shanghai, up the Yang-tse to Chung-King, and thence across country *vid* Yunnan to the French colony and the Gulf of Tongking. Having done all this he naturally wrote a book about it.

There is an immense amount of political information in Mr. Colquhoun's new work which will be eagerly studied by those who wish to obtain an intelligent understanding of the present crisis. The author, as is well known, is a skilled writer, and not a mere compiler of notes taken on a journey, and his descriptions of the long railway

passage across Siberia, and of the places and peoples, are wonderfully vivid. Therefore Mr. Colquhoun's chapters on "Life in Peking—Past and Present," are of absorbing interest. His account of the approach to the capital from the Gobi Desert is worth quoting:

As we near the capital the stream of life becomes continuous. Mule-litters and sedan-chairs, though less frequent, add their touch of quaintness to the scene; and strings of solemn, silent-footed camels occasionally block the roads—each tied by a string through the nose to the tail of its foregoer. From the shaggy neck of the leader jangles a deep-toned, not unmelodious bell; and on its back a Mongol nods and sways half asleep, his purple robe and yellow sash adding a note of colour to the dingy humps he bestrides. The scene is a fascinating one for the new arrival, whether from over seas or over land: the tinkle and clang of mule and camel-bells; the cries of the drivers; the grunting sing-song of the barrow coolies; the strange blue-coated, bronze-featured throng, all working out their existence unconscious of any world beyond the radius of a few li. And yet so civilised!

And so the road continues over the broken causeway, on whose gray flagstones so many Imperial pageants have passed in a by-gone age.

Although there is neither steeple nor minaret to guide us, and the country is still open, we feel that Peking must be close at hand. Even the weary mules seem to know instinctively that their long journey is finished, and, of their own accord, quicken the pace. The excitement increases with each turn of the road, with each obscuring clump of trees; and the suspense has become so tense as to be almost unpleasant, when, quite suddenly, the huge walls stand before us. Revealed at once from base to parapet, they dwarf all else to insignificance and fill the entire landscape. In the last rays of the afternoon sun the weather-beaten masonry is suffused with rose tints, the sands glow, and the moat beyond becomes a stream of molten gold. . . . Before us, springing straight from the sand, tower the monuments of the conquering Manchu, so lofty that men are dwarfed by them to pygmies, so broad that three chariots might race abreast along their jungle-covered tops, and solid as the walls of Jericho before the trumpet blast! In that pure air the crenellated parapets stand out clear-cut, distance is practically annihilated, and the eye can follow bastion after bastion stretching away in a long line, from which, like giant sentinels, the many-storied towers, marking the nine great gates, look out across the plain. The walls themselves are of earth faced with huge bricks, and are built at an inward slope from base to parapet. In the interstices cling many a bush, and even trees, while from the gate-towers frown tier upon tier of painted representations of cannon. As our cart clatters under the echoing arch of the vast gateway the sun sets, and, in a dusty stream of camels, horsemen, and strange vehicles, we enter the Middle Ages.

In the old days, before the Franco-Russian alliance made the French Minister the obedient servant of the Russians, society in Peking seems to have been very pleasant. Then the tone was set by the British Legation, whether in diplomatic or in social matters. Every function bore a cosmopolitan character, and the geniality of good fellowship was agreeably controlled within tactful diplomatic forms. The community amounted to about one hundred, of whom fifteen were ladies, and if any stranger was in doubt as to his exact status, it was only necessary to send for the old Peking barber and see what position he was given in that functionary's rigid scale of charges. This was one dollar for cutting the hair of a plenipotentiary and envoy-extraordinary, eighty cents for a chargé d'affaires, thirty cents for an attaché, twenty cents for a student, and ten cents for a missionary, with intermediate charges for a customs commissioner, a secretary of Legation, and so forth. With the Chinese officials the diplomatists had little personal intercourse. First calls were paid to and returned by the Yamén, and at New Year the Chinese Ministers came in a body to call. But beyond this there

was no personal intercourse, as no Chinaman would risk being ill-thought of at Court by visiting a Legation on his own account. A few years ago the Chinese Minister in St. Petersburg became very intimate with Count Cassini, driving with him and lunching with him without ceremony. A year or two later the Chinaman returned to Peking as a member of the Tsung-li Yamén, and Count Cassini became Minister at Peking. But the Chinaman carefully avoided the Count, and gave no sign of remembering the old days on the Neva. When the Russo-French alliance began the old happy family circle of Ministers was broken up into cliques, and intrigues of all sorts bred bitterness and jealousy. Every annoyance, petty or otherwise, that the Russian and French Ministers could contrive to spite the British was indulged in, and no scruples of good taste or good manners withheld them. The Tsung-li Yamén were bullied and threatened, and as they looked in vain for help from England, were at last completely cowed.

The chapters on the Yang-tse Valley and South-western China are mournful reading, for they are a chronicle of lost opportunities and wasted chances. But they should be carefully studied. The book is well illustrated, and has several useful maps, but its value would be greatly increased if it had a better index. It seems hard for authors and publishers to understand that a book of this sort loses half its utility if it is not provided with a full and intelligently compiled index.

Other New Books.

HURRAH FOR THE LIFE
OF A SAILOR.

BY VICE-ADMIRAL
SIR WILLIAM KENNEDY.

This is a wind and salt-water book. Expanded from a series of articles in the *Boy's Own Paper*, it is full of boyish spirits as well as mature experience; the title, indeed, gives the keynote to one of the most joyous books of naval reminiscences that has come in our way. The author's story begins on December 10, 1851, when the Rodney, a 90-gun sailing line-of-battle ship, was lying in Portsmouth waiting for her crew. "This operation often took six months at that time instead of as many hours as at present. The crews were picked up anyhow—longshore loafers, jail-birds, and such-like, with a sprinkling of good seamen among them—and it took the first year of their commission to knock them into shape." The rough humours of those days are laughingly sketched. Tyrannical midshipmen made the cadets kneel on their lockers and pray aloud for their persecutors' success in examinations, the signal to begin being usually a blow on the back with a hammer. We are grateful for the boatswain who said to the cabin boy: "Here, boy, we'll hexpense with your services, you disgustable young blackguard." Also for the story of the two drunken sailors at the opera at Malta: one of them was so far gone in liquor that he fell over the railing into the pit. His comrade, under the impression that it was a case of man overboard, promptly dived after him. Neither was killed; one broke his leg, the other was unharmed. The author knows some amusing cases in which tyrannical flogging officers had the tables turned on them:

A small craft was paid off at Devonport many years ago on her return from the West Coast of Africa. Nearly all the ship's company had been flogged during the commission. The captain was taking a walk up one of the streets of Devonport when an old woman came up to him and said, "Be you Captain —?"

"Yes, my good woman. What can I do for you?"

"Take that! for flogging my son," said she, at the same time whipping out a hake-fish and "letting him have it" across the face.

A certain frigate captain, a notorious bully, was thus served by his long-suffering clerk:

The captain was a small man, the clerk a big, powerful fellow; so one day he went into the captain's cabin, knocked him down, and gave him a good thrashing. The skipper yelled for help, and the sentry rushed in; but the clerk threw himself on the deck, and dragged the captain on the top of him, at the same time shouting for assistance. The only evidence was the sentry's, and he said that all he saw was the captain on the top of the clerk, apparently striking him.

The clerk, therefore, went scot free. The author was himself twice thoroughly flogged — "once for a most innocent remark: when our master's wife presented her husband with a son I asked if the babe had a stiff leg like his father."

Sir William Kennedy's reminiscences wander through the Crimean war, the war with China (1856), slave-chasing off Zanzibar, revolution in South America, and naval operations off Newfoundland, Hayti, Trinidad, Madagascar, the Andamans, &c., &c., with sport and shore adventure thrown in. A manlier, merrier book of naval reminiscences could not be desired. (Blackwood. 12s. 6d.)

SOUTH AFRICA, PAST AND PRESENT. BY V. R. MARKHAM.

The author of this book having travelled in South Africa, and having met and conversed with all sorts and conditions of men, both English and Dutch, has been moved to write a book. One advantage Miss Markham's book has over its hundred and one rivals, or, at least, over most of them, is that it is better written. It seldom lapses into slipshod on the one hand, or into would-be fine writing on the other, and those of us who are jealous for the English tongue will be relieved to be able to read a book on the great question of the day without a ceaseless feeling of irritation and annoyance. V. R. Markham is English in her sympathies, and has no fellow-feeling for the "men belonging to a class who have never benefited this country by word or deed"; and she is clear-headed enough to see that the Jameson Raid was a result, and not a cause, of the misrule and corruption in the Transvaal. But she is rather too much inclined to float with the tide, and to make a scapegoat of Mr. Rhodes. But it is difficult to be judicial, and easy to gain a reputation for impartiality, when dealing with matters which have aroused so much controversy, and have led to such mighty issues. The book is divided into three parts: first, a sketch of South African history; secondly, a study of native affairs; and, thirdly, notes from a travelling diary. There is a useful historical chart, and an index just full enough to make one wish it were more comprehensive. (Smith, Elder & Co.)

TWENTY FAMOUS NAVAL BATTLES. BY E. K. RAWSON.

Half a century ago Sir Edward Creasy wrote *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, a book which keeps its value to this day. That which Sir Edward Creasy did for battles on land (saving the Armada) we have long waited for a chronicler to do for battles on the sea. There are plenty of sea-fights which have influenced the course of history, and which are even more inspiring than land wars, but so far the *vates sacer* has not arisen to sing them. Mr. Edward Kirk Rawson, "Professor United States Navy, Superintendent Naval War Records," has had his chance and missed it. He has compiled two fine volumes on twenty famous naval battles, from Salamis to Santiago; but with all the world of history before him he has not known how to select with discrimination. In a work like this some connecting idea should run through the whole, and link the great combats one to another, but Mr. Rawson's battles are all detached and isolated. However, he could hardly connect them historically, for some of them are the veriest small beer. Salamis and Actium are well enough; vast issues hung on Lepanto; the

Revenge made a struggle that will never die; and the Armada, the Nile, and Trafalgar take their place as of right in any volume of this sort. But what is absolutely astonishing is Mr. Rawson's lack of any sense of proportion. What place has a duel with the pirate Paul Jones in such company, or the various American fights, such as that on Lake Erie in 1813, and those between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* and the *Alabama* and the *Kearsage* later on? Even the engagements in Manila Bay and at Santiago are of little value, as the opposing forces were so unequal, and the affairs were not so much battles as battues. (Isbister. 2 vols. 21s. net.)

THE REIGN OF TERROR. BY Mlle. DES ECHEROLLES.

Nothing so brings home to one the sordid horrors of the French Revolution as personal narratives by the ladies of good family who underwent all the miseries of the time and yet survived to write their memoirs. These sidelights on the Reign of Terror were written long ago by Mlle. des Echerolles, but have only just been Englished—and, it may be noted, have been most excellently translated—by Miss Marie Clotilde Balfour. Mlle. des Echerolles was the daughter of an officer of the King, and, when only thirteen years old, in 1791, fled with her father and aunt to Lyons, where they hoped to lose themselves in the huge population of the city. But M. des Echerolles was asked to command the Lyonnais who rose against the revolutionaries, and, as a consequence, after the defeat of the loyalists, was hunted from place to place by the Government. Happily, he escaped their clutches; but his sister was not so fortunate, for she was guillotined, and Mlle. des Echerolles was left alone in a great city, without money and far from her home. She describes most strikingly the way in which they lived, the domiciliary visits, the interrogations and the requisitions of all kinds, and the life in the prison, where the women were herded together denuded of everything, even of necessaries. The little girl managed to get an interview with Citizen Parcin to beg for her aunt's life:

He only answered me by a conventional phrase: "As a private man I pity you; as a public man I can do nothing!" And then he turned his back on me without the least sign of compassion. Yet this man to whom I prayed, this man who had sat at my father's table, this man whom I had approached without fear—this man it was who had had my aunt arrested, who had replied, "Let her perish!" to those who had said to him, "We find nothing against her, and she is your fellow-citizen."

The book is simply written, and has a personal touch which gives it life, though a hundred years and more have elapsed since the events it records took place. (John Lane.)

Fiction.

Talent Undisciplined.

Voices in the Night. By Flora Annie Steel. (Heinemann. 6s.)

The Minx. By "Iota." (Hutchinson & Co. 6s.)

We have conscientiously read through both these books. Such a phrase, used in connexion with a work of imagination, implies disparagement; nay, so far as concerns the utterer, it is a final and unanswerable reproach. Nevertheless, we use it, both in sorrow and in anger—sorrow at the thought of what these books might have been, anger at the spectacle of what they are. Here are two authors of quite surprising and exceptional gifts. Differing in their themes, they have many points in common. Each possesses insight, imaginative power,

sympathy, and a fine individuality. Each is thoroughly aware of her world. Mrs. Mannington Caffyn among English society, and Mrs. Steel in the wider and prodigious field of India—they are at home; they know; they have summed up human nature in their ways, and what they may care to say about life is worth hearing. We hold a very high opinion of Mrs. Caffyn's talent. As for Mrs. Steel upon India, Mr. Rudyard Kipling might go to school to her and begin in the first form. When we consider the three chief characters in *The Minx*, Joyce and her two lovers; when we consider the vast crowd of strongly-conceived people in *Voices in the Night*, and especially that astonishing and daring creation, Chris Davenant; when we remember isolated scenes in both books, such as the talk between Elinor and Joyce over the burnt child, and the immense drama of the railway bridge at the end of Mrs. Steel's novel—we feel that these authors should surely belong to the elect of authors. . . . And yet it was only by the aid of conscience that we conquered their books. The plain fact is, that Mrs. Steel and Mrs. Caffyn would be distinguished writers, no less—if they could write. They cannot write. The complaint has been made before, but we must make it again, and continue to make it, more and more energetically: these authors have never taken the trouble to learn one essential part of their business. That is the simple English of the affair, and we offer no apology for stating it.

It is not the mere occasional bad grammar and verbal vulgarity that offend us, though there is sufficient offence in locutions like "loaned," "fussing about," "boss the show," and sentences like the following:

She realised swiftly that with purpose, opinion, and principles to uphold, therein lies tragedy.

It would no more have occurred to James Coates to pass Mrs. Thorpe's door without going in to see her, than it would have done to pass Elinor Moore's.

Great writers have sinned as deep. A much graver offence lies in the complete absence of any feeling for style, for even the outward dignity of sentences; in that constant ignoring of literary good form which by its persistence irritates far more than any outrageous solecism. One can recall public dinners at which it would have been a relief to cry out to one's neighbour: "For Heaven's sake, eat your peas with a knife and have done." There are those who sneer at the nicety of good form in writing. With cheerful contempt they ejaculate: "What does it matter?" But it does matter. It does count. Without acquiring it, no author ever did or ever will reach the high levels.

And even more important than literary good form is the broad general technique of story writing, which neither Mrs. Steel nor Mrs. Caffyn seems in the least to trouble about. A vast trackless, tangled jungle of words—that is *The Minx* and that is *Voices in the Night*. A series of tremendous shapeless slabs of minute observation, each labelled and each crushing the life out of some tiny fragment of actual tale—that also is *The Minx* and *Voices in the Night*. One finds no selective austerity, no effort after contours and symmetry, no dramatic directness of movement. All is confused, enormous, forbidding. The reader must constitute himself an explorer or an excavator; he must be prepared for deserts, glaciers, strata of solid, useless rock.

If Mrs. Steel and Mrs. Caffyn, with all their brilliant attributes, would only be at the inconvenience of learning—. But they will not. What is, must be. And as we are confronted by novel after novel of these esteemed writers, who can do everything but write, we feel ourselves assuming a sort of Oriental resignation before the inexplicabilities of existence.

The Second Lady Delcombe. By the Hon. Mrs. Kennard.
(Hutchinson.)

In this excellent first novel Mrs. Kennard has used the Divorce Court as a background. The divorce of the first Lady Delcombe is ten years old when the story opens, and it is understood at once that the plot has no connexion with the sordid, common details which lead up to the State-aided liberation of unhappy couples. The incidents of divorce and the re-marriage of divorced persons are such ordinary affairs in the society with which the book is concerned that they are, as it were, taken for granted. The author does indeed introduce a clergyman who holds the opinion that he ought to conform to the law of his Church and not recognise Lord Delcombe's second venture in holy matrimony; but, on the other hand, the first Lady Delcombe is a member of an ancient Roman Catholic family, and seems to find no inconvenience attached to her marriage with Mr. Ratclyffe.

One of the unalterable laws of fiction is that neither shot nor shell, earthquakes nor volcanic eruptions, can seriously injure a hero or heroine; while certain other clearly-defined characters succumb to the slightest accident. To this latter class belongs, as we all know, the boy: the more charming the boy the more certain his doom. It was, then, no surprise when Tony, Lord Delcombe's only son, was laid upon his deathbed. We knew that deathbed was inevitable from the moment Tony met his father at Eton; but, for all that we bowed to an inexorable fate, we rebelled. Tony is so natural, so refreshing, that we grudged the parting. But the reader's sorrow is, of course, Mrs. Kennard's opportunity. The two Lady Delcombes met at Tony's side, and the result—is a triumph for the author. She treats the situation with such simplicity, such quiet reserve, that it is only before the meeting—and after—that we realise that an "impossible" moment has been faced and passed.

In many ways, *The Second Lady Delcombe* is unconventional. We are allowed to make the acquaintance of the heroine, an American girl, quietly. Her character is not ushered in with a blare of trumpets, and we are left to learn her innocence, her generosity, her charm through her words and actions. The book also contains some clever character-studies of women.

Notes on Novels.

[These notes on the week's Fiction are not necessarily final.
Reviews of a selection will follow.]

THE AVENGING OF
RUTHANNA.

By MRS. COULSON KERNAHAN.

Infidelity in marriage is the theme of this story by the author of *Trewinnot of Guy's*, and though the story is handled discreetly the upshot is of an advanced order. A curious feature in the book is a full-page facsimile of the Death Certificate of one of the characters, the cause of death being given as: *Primary*, Poisoning by Prussic Acid; *Secondary*, Syncope. This observation catches our eye: "It is one of life's ironies that the wrong things always get overheard, and the right ones rarely." (John Long. 6s.)

THE MARRIED MISS BINKS. By JOHN STRANGE WINTER.

This is a sequel to *The Binks Family*, in which was set forth the rise in the world of an enterprising milkman, with all the mistakes and adventures rising out of his social ascent. Here we study the later fortunes of the family, with special reference to Polly Knipp, *née* Binks, who thus instructs a younger sister on her forthcoming wedding: "I wouldn't be married down here, if I were you, unless you could rake up a bishop to perform the ceremony. Oh, that's easy enough to manage if you would like it! I'll get

Lord Robert to arrange it for you. . . . It's all as simple as daylight when you know the ropes." (F. V. White & Co. 3s. 6d.)

THE LADYSMITH TREASURY. ED. BY J. EVELEIGH NASH.

We have already explained the genesis and aims of this collection of stories by well-known writers. The profits on the sale of the book will be sent to the Mayor of Ladysmith, and will be devoted to relieving distress in that town. All the stories, save three, are printed for the first time. The place of honour is filled by Mr. Anstey's "The Game of Adverbs," which appeared in *Punch*. (Sands. 6s.)

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"FOR A GOD DISHONoured."
MERCILESS LOVE.

A readable and original story turning on vivisection. The heroine renounces her lover and her life's happiness in order to prevent £40,000 going to the founding of a Pasteur Institute—the predicament being created for her by the will of a former lover who jealously wished, on his deathbed, to prevent her marrying, and used his knowledge of her character to that end. (John Long. 6s.)

A MILLIONAIRE OF YESTERDAY.

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM.

The hero, Scarlett Trent, is a millionaire with a past. He describes life in the City thus: "It's an ugly fascination. You are in the swim, and you must hold your own. You gamble with other men, and when you win you chuckle. All the time you're whittling your conscience away—if you ever had any. You're never quite dishonest, and you're never quite honest. You come out on top, and afterwards you hate yourself. It's a dirty little life." (Ward, Lock. 3s. 6d.)

THE CRIMSON WEED.

By CHRISTOPHER ST. JOHN.

It is not easy to indicate the plot of this novel, the hero of which is a kind of modern Hamlet consumed with the desire to avenge a great wrong done to his mother and to himself. The motto of the story is Bacon's: "Revenge is a kind of wild justice which the more man's nature runs to the more ought law to weed it out." The style is good, and the story is full of intellectuality. (Duckworth. 6s.)

A DIPLOMATIC WOMAN.

By HUAN MEE.

Six readable short stories of diplomatic melodrama. The first tells how a clever woman detected the wife of a Russian ambassador in the act of communicating a secret cypher, which is written in the paper of a cigarette. (Sands.)

NATIVE BORN.

By WILLIAM SYLVESTER WALKER.

Mr. Walker, who loves also to call himself "Coo-ee," made something of a hit with his story, *When the Mopoko Calls*. Here, as there, he revels in Australian bush lore, "station" work, pioneering, and the open-air life of the Colonies. This story is all movement and variety; there is the less reason, therefore, for its passages of rather obvious philosophy eked out with italics that sometimes come so frequently as to suggest a mosquito attack on the reader. (John Long. 6s.)

THE VANISHING OF TERA.

By FERGUS HUME.

"Suddenly a warm clasp was laid upon her wrist, and Tera awoke from her ecstasy to find a fair Saxon face close to her own. With a quiet little sigh of pleasure she nestled into the breast of the man. 'Jack,' she murmured softly, 'O'ia fe gwa te ofal.'" You see Tera was a Kanaka girl, and a convert, who had been brought to England and was the shining light of the Grimleigh Bethesda, and pious, and beautiful, and possessed of £3,000 worth of pearls, not to mention monarchical prospects on a Pacific island. (White & Co. 6s.)

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The Writer's Trade.

THE late Mr. Grant Allen was a hard-working writer, if he was nothing else. Mr. Clodd gives a list of seventy-two books to which he put his name or pseudonym. He wrote seventy-two books, and in a sense regretted them all. He believed that science was his calling, and now and then he wreaked that belief on a book to which, as he must have deeply felt, he had given only the leavings of energies devoted to the less ambitious work of writing stories and essays for the market. Whatever his aspirations and whatever his accomplishments in science, the fact remains that in the catalogue Grant Allen passes as a writer. It is a common thing for writers to ply their trade under protest, to nurse big regrets and vain desires. For a writer is a thinker, and whatever overplus of thought and energy are left when he has supplied the market is sure to be adventurous. In Grant Allen this overplus was a large and turbulent quantity, and it insisted on expression. Hence, at almost periodic intervals, he wrote special books to carry it off, books into which he believed he had put his best. In his last illness he said: "I want no memorial over my remains; tell those who care for anything that I may have done to buy a copy of *Force and Energy*." It was a human message; but the world pays its own tributes to a man, and it is possible to care for what Grant Allen did, and not buy this all but forgotten book. Hazlitt said that the only one of his works he cared anything about was his work on *The Principles of Human Actions*. It is almost the only writing of his which the world has agreed to neglect. To us it seems that Grant Allen's true work was the work that rejoiced him least—the work of the efficient, though ephemeral, writer. Are we therefore to dismiss his achievement as a common thing? It is on this point that we wish to say a word. The man who writes to live is not to be trusted to comment on his own performance, which he too often sees as a tissue of compromises. Full of compromises it must be, but these are often of a noble sort. A man is to be judged by the conditions under which he works; it is only when these are found and defined that Justice takes her seat. To Allen came the familiar struggles, cross-purposes, and regrets. When his first novel, *Philistia*, disappointed his expectations, he wrote:

I have put into it my very best, and it's quite clear that the best isn't good enough. I didn't write hastily, I satisfied utterly my critical faculty, and I can't do any better. Indeed, I can never again do so well. Now, this hasn't at all cast me down or disappointed me. I haven't so much ambition for myself as you are kind enough to have for me. I never cared for the chance of literary reputation except as a means of making a livelihood for Nellie and the boy. I can now make a livelihood easily; and I ought to turn to whatever will make it best. . . . I am trying with each new novel to go a step lower to catch the market.

Mr. Clodd is right when he says that such expressions of a black mood must be taken with qualification. They are incidental and inevitable. Much sentiment has been expended on the worn bread-winning writer. It is

time to define the work, the goal, and the legitimate consolations of those who engage in the writing trade—that trade which has, in late years, increased at such a rate that its religion seems to be still to seek. We have mentioned Hazlitt—how soon in any discussion of the writer's craft one thinks of Hazlitt! To him, with all his steely good sense, came the black *cui bono* mood of the Little Writer. He had seen an Indian juggler keep four balls in the air, and Mr. Richer walking the tight-rope at Sadler's Wells. These sights threw him into regrets.

What have I been doing all my life? Have I been idle, or have I nothing to show for all my labour and pains? Or have I passed my time in pouring words like water into empty sieves, rolling a stone up hill and then down again, trying to prove an argument in the teeth of facts, and looking for causes in the dark and finding them? Is there no one thing in which I can challenge competition, that I can bring as an instance of exact perfection, in which others cannot find a flaw? The utmost I can pretend to is to write a description of what this fellow [the Indian Juggler] can do. I can write a book: so can many others who have not learned even to spell. What abortions are these Essays! What errors, what ill-pieced transitions, what crooked reasons, what lame conclusions! How little is made out, and that little how ill! Yet they are the best I can do.

A most useful confession to quote! It comes from one of the greatest of the Little Writers. It sounds, with silvery clearness and coldness, that tragic note in a writer's life—his sense of the vagueness, the dubiety, the sorry incalculableness of all his service to men. How many times have we heard a clever writer exclaim in weariness that he wished he were a shoemaker producing shoes in which men might stand upright and walk about their business. "As proper men as ever trod on neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork," says the cobbler in "Julius Cæsar." What a boast was that, uttered in a Roman mob, and in a dangerous moment. It was irrelevant to the occasion; say rather it was relevant to all occasions—this producible smiling fact, this assertion of the man's helpfulness in a capacity which no upheaval could impair, no logic confound. Tribunes, rebels, merchants, assassins, all must be shod. Alas, it is in the same play that the feebleness of authors is incarnated. The wretched Cinna who was *not* Cinna the poet, and screamingly protested as much, was borne down. "Tear him in pieces for his bad verses!"

Now, such arguments and instances beset every writer, as they did Hazlitt, but we contend that they are moody and delusive. We will say nothing about the transitoriness of all juggling and rope-dancing fame. The point is this—and to no one is it clearer than to the Hazlitts when they choose to be themselves: it is in the nature of shoe-making and rope-dancing to produce visible and computable results, whereas it is not in the nature of writing to do so. This is one of those things which the mind can accept, but not the heart. The writer may grasp it whenever he will, but the man rejects it in every open or human mood. The comfort it brings can be seized only by a process of thought, by ratiocination, by instances, or by a constructive hope. But to hope when you want to see, to ratiocinate when you want to know—this is hard. One may discharge the work of an hour, a day, on such a basis, but a lifetime, with all its temperamental sinkings, its backwaters and obstacles, is not so easily sustained on these difficult renewals of self-satisfaction. The work of the writer (again we exclude the immortals, who, however, rarely know their luck) is perhaps the most inconclusive of all work. There is no clear task to be finished. A writer may choose his mark and hit it; and, when he has done so, the wise declare that the mark was ill-chosen, was, in fact, not worth hitting. But, indeed, we are rather considering the case of the writer who, confessedly, has not even chosen a

mark, but is a writer at large, a public excogitator, and a wandering voice. What of him when the window "slowly grows a glimmering square"? What of his pains—for he took pains—and of his achievement—for surely he had a gatherable achievement? Grant Allen may not have been—he was not—the precise type of such a writer, and yet his death at the age of fifty-two fills us with these melancholy questions.

We shall not call the answers to them melancholy. Away with these *cui bono* reflections that strike at life. The age which has multiplied the literary journalist beyond all precedent must have evolved, with the man, a gospel. Undoubtedly this is an age of ephemeral writers. It may be that, two hundred years hence, not a single writer now living will be accounted a classic save only Mr. Meredith. The rest of us are doomed; some of us will be forgotten as writers before we perish as men; others will attain to obituaries, others to a decade of memories; a few will be quoted until 1950 ("a clever writer of forty years ago remarked"), and a little band will be known and quoted by name all the way to the year 2000. But in intention, in ambition, and in fact, we all are travelling the one highway of letters as surely as he who walks to Finchley is on the same Great North Road with him who toils to York. From this community of purpose spring the pride and discouragement of the Little Writer. He toils as hard as any; he has wit, fancy, penetration, and has the meanings and music of words in his mind; there is no pains that he spares himself to seize the truths in his path and to adorn them; he re-writes his writings and launches them in books on the same waters that bore Milton and Dryden and Hazlitt to their desired havens; but his voyage ends at the harbour bar; he is not washed down to the happy valley of Avilion.

We have scores of such writers to-day. They call themselves hacks in dark moods; but they are not hacks, and know it. The root of the matter is in them, but soil, climate, opportunity, and their original force prevent them rising to the height of a great tree in which the birds may build. They declare with Hazlitt, "These Essays are the best I can do"; they are tempted to explain themselves like Allen: "I never cared for the chance of literary reputation except as a means of making a livelihood for Nellie and the boy." But in these moods the saving fact is lost—the fact that they are on the true old highway of letters. It is more important to be really on that highway than to reach any point in its length. How much greater is the difference between the seeking of that road and the having found it, than between a near or a distant goal along its august track. May not the Little Writer, reasoning for himself, and groping for a hopeful theory of his writing, begin, once for all, to separate the ideas of success and a continuing name? Has time really so much to do with the matter? For in literature three years are a "boom," and thirty are fame, and three hundred are immortality, and three thousand are Homer, and then the counting is done. Is it then such a little thing to have struck a bliss upon a day; to have spread little feasts of reason on successive Mondays or Wednesdays in an appointed column; to have tried, sometimes with known success, to illuminate a subject on which the talk is running; to have defined a tendency; to have lanced an error; or in any way to have stimulated the minds of tired men whose lives will cease with your own? Surely this is no shadowy harvest that a Little Writer may reap before he meets the Reaper. If its quantity be a vague thing, let him think in what a wide field he sowed, in what good company, with what large ecstasies, with what hints of acceptance, and with what germinations not yet revealed. He will rejoice, too, in his unpaid toil, his insane solitudes of thought and phrase, his corrections pencilled against stone walls, in the rain, while Fleet-street roared for his "copy." How sweet those pains which he need not have taken!

Things Seen.

Panic.

I HAD been vaguely conscious that the train was waiting longer than usual at the station, but the book I read was interesting, and I let the moments slip by. Suddenly the stranger laid down his paper. "Why are we waiting?" he asked. I leaned out of the carriage window. The fireman was standing by the side of the engine. The doors were opening. Anxious passengers were asking questions of the guard, who, his hand shading his eyes, was staring backwards along the line. "It's nothing," I muttered; nevertheless I alighted, and as I stepped on to the gravel a score of passengers were doing likewise. They asked each other the same question—"What's the matter? Why are we waiting?" A man, carrying a fishing-rod, jumped from the train and climbed over the paling into the roadway. "What's the matter?" I said to him. "Oh, it's best to be on the safe side," he answered. "What's the matter, guard?" I asked. "We're late, and I guess we've got to let the express go by!" He spoke in a loud voice, and, at his words, a panic of fear seemed to seize the people. They tumbled from the carriages. Parcels, packages, baskets were thrown upon the platform. "Get back, get back," shouted the guard; but nobody obeyed him. I looked back along the track. We were on a side line of rails. Behind us gleamed the main line, the bright metals curving away from us. Suddenly there was a roar and a rattle. It was the express. Somebody screamed. A child clutched my arm, and, at the same moment, the express curled away like a snake, and rushed past on its own bright metals.

We resumed our seats. My companion fanned himself with his hat. "It's all owing to Slough," he said. "Phew! But suppose—suppose—the points hadn't acted." As we steamed from the station we passed the fisherman plodding along the road.

"L'Empereur."

THE eye-filling fact in Cherbourg is that the town is the great northern military and naval port of France. The wide sweep of the harbour, dotted with ships of war and set with forts at intervals on its long circumference; the greater fortress, high above the roofs, staring watchfully over the sea; the lines of barracks; the troops in companies, the officers in groups, scattered everywhere throughout the streets; these, and these alone, make the character of the town.

I had set out after breakfast to stroll through the narrow streets, and to see what the place had to offer me; I had watched the men at their work, the recruits at their drill, when, returning to my hotel and pondering upon all I had seen, I found myself in the Place Napoléon, the statue of the great Emperor before me. Mounted on his charger, with arm outstretched over the harbour, his eyes fixed on the distance that alone hid England from his gaze, there sat Napoleon; and plain beneath the figure was the inscription which told of his resolve, his promise to the people of France, that "the glories of the East" should be outshone by the wonders of the future!

My mind, following the gesture of the outstretched arm, went back over the water to my country beyond, I thought of Acre and of Alexandria, of Salamanca and of Vittoria, of Trafalgar and of Waterloo; I thought of Egypt and of the Soudan, of Dreyfus and of Fashoda; I remembered tales of the madness that at times will rush upon a nation, tales of dishonour at home gilded over with glory abroad. An empty glorification of the past, I asked myself, or a standing, pregnant menace of the future? What was the significance of this thing, standing there in Cherbourg before the eyes of all, at the close of the nineteenth century?

The Art of Writing for Children.

It was a child who said of a neglected heap of latter-day nursery-books—which to the grown-up mind looked attractive enough to please any child's fancy—"They are very nice, only I don't want to read them. Everything is all right, except the story." And then, struck with a sudden inspiration, added: "Couldn't you make up a proper story about the pictures?"

Child-like, she had gone straight to the point, and had put her finger on the spot of failure when she said "Everything is all right but the story." It is the story that fails. It has lost the art of holding the children's attention, because it is, for the most part, above their heads. The truth is, that the author of to-day, however clever he may be, and however good his intention of amusing the youngsters, will never gain their affections until he has lost the trick he has fallen into of keeping his eye on the grown-up audience while he is telling the children stories. They must have his whole attention or he will lose theirs. If he would succeed in his task he must give himself up unreservedly to his legitimate audience, and enter into their world and their moods. By doing so he will find that his task becomes far easier of accomplishment. He will not be handicapped by all those many things which prevented him letting his imagination have full play while his eyes rested upon the critical grown-up audience.

Think what *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* would have lost had their author kept his eye upon the grown-up audience, instead of giving himself to a world peopled by little folk, who saw nothing strange in rabbits talking, mock-turtles weeping, and pigs turning into babies, and who accepted strange creatures like the Jabberwock as calmly as they did the imperiousness of a Queen who ordered massacres with Royal indifference as to whether they were carried out or not. It was an ideal audience and one to inspire an author. For, even if the children saw nothing of the whimsical adherence to the forms of logic in the stories of *Alice's Adventures*, they nevertheless revelled in the quaint mixture of sense and nonsense which so exactly hit their childish level and caught their fancy, holding them entranced with its dreamlike unity. The stories possess very much the same attraction that the old fairy stories have always had for children. For all their topsyturvydom they are simple, and deal with life as they themselves view it.

And simplicity has always attracted children. It was no gorgeous description that attracted them to the household tales of the Brothers Grimm, and afterwards to Andersen's legends. It is the simplicity of the tales that charms them, they feel that they are the real thing and they instinctively know that there is nothing stagey or affected about them. They are intelligible and easy of comprehension by the child-mind. The stories enter on no wild flights of romance, but run easily and smoothly among everyday paths of life, so that it requires no great imagination to follow them. They are the tales of the common folk, handed down from a period long before the dawn of history, easily understood by man and child alike. Moreover, they are not extravagant or out of proportion, and this is a point that children appreciate, for they have a larger sense of proportion than "children's writers" suppose.

Most children infinitely prefer Grimm's stories of the Geese Maidens and the shepherd lads set in their native surroundings to all the glories of gilded palaces and the Eastern gorgeousness of the *Arabian Nights*: in very much the same way that we prefer the Mab and Puck of Shakespeare in their woodland homes to Herrick's fairies, for all the glories of Oberon's palace, or his Temple "enchased with glass and beads."

For children lack imagination pure and simple. They can elaborate anything they have seen or heard minutely described until it is well-nigh unrecognisable, but the power of creation or grasping anything to which they possess no former clue is a flight to which they do not easily rise. The wonderment of the new idea stupefies them. They prefer to play their stories among the scenes with which they are familiar, to groping in their half-furnished minds after those strange mis-shapen ideas, high and fantastical with which the grown mind amuses itself.

If a topic or conception be in essence above a child's range, no amount of simplicity in the treatment will make it interesting to him. Children also like plenty of action in their stories. They are such restless beings, they must ever be up and doing; they love to hear of fighting dragons, rescuing princesses, and—with the exception of high-strung nervous children—they revel in "bluggy stories," as did the little hero in *Helen's Babies*. Stories of giants who would make their meals off the favourite hero (who, in spite of his undoubted superiority of wit and wisdom, his manly beauty, and his somewhat ostentatious virtues, is invariably despised by his family, and sent to seek his fortune as best he can), have always and will always attract the infant mind; while of Biblical stories nothing appeals as strongly to the juvenile taste and imagination as the story of David and Goliath, except, perhaps, the slaying of Abel by his brother Cain. How many times these scenes have been acted in nursery theatricals will never be known.

Perhaps one of the strongest tests of popularity that can be applied to a story-book is whether it is considered sufficiently interesting to be acted in the nursery. "A good acting book is worth all the others put together," was the verdict of a schoolroom critic who had views upon the subject of juvenile fiction. Certainly, this love of mimicry in children should not be overlooked by the stormers of the nursery library. And here, again, the grown-up audience will have to be entirely put aside, and the author be prepared to give explicit details as to how everything is done.

Half the popularity of *Robinson Crusoe* is due to the fact that there is so much doing in the book, and such minute details are given as to how everything was accomplished. Had the author kept his eye on the grown-up audience while he wrote, he might, and very probably would, have left out the greater part of the book—the very part that makes it intelligible to children—leaving it to the imagination of his readers. But, fortunately, he realised that the child's experience was too incomplete to supply the information, and that it was beyond the scope of childhood to imagine all the resources open to Crusoe. It is this art of getting in touch with children that writers of to-day lack. The adults will keep coming between the story-teller and his audience and spoiling the tale for both.

Let him who would write for Youth go to the old authors, and try and discover their secret of holding the child's fancy. Else, for all the attention of the best authors of to-day, the art of simple story-telling, which is the attraction of men and children alike, will soon be lost.

THERE are men and women who regard the weaving of stories calculated to influence the impressionable mind of a child as a branch of the literary calling as honourable as that of the sensational novelist or newspaper hack. To write successfully for the young is an art requiring special gifts and methods; an art which, though at present ignored, will in time receive due recognition and reward.

"A Writer for Boys" in "The Author" (July).

Correspondence.

Ernest Dowson.

SIR,—Mr. Harold Lush's letter decides me never again to indulge in unlabelled pleasantry—lest it fall into the hands of a professional humorist and be misconstrued.—I am, &c.,
YOUR CORRESPONDENT.

"Two Stage Plays."

SIR,—Will you allow me a few lines to correct a statement which appeared in the ACADEMY of June 30, over the signature "The Bookworm"?

Two Stage Plays, by Lucy Snowe, will not have the advantage of being published by Mr. Heinemann, but is the first volume which will be issued, in a few days, with my imprint.—I am, &c.,

R. BIMLEY JOHNSON.

8, York-buildings, Adelphi, W.C. : July 2, 1900.

A Disclaimer.

SIR,—In the ACADEMY of June 23 there is, on page 537, the following statement:

The author of *A Peep into "Punch,"* by the way, is Mr. J. Holt Schooling, the ingenious statistician, who, month after month, instructs the readers of the popular magazines in such curious and valuable matters as the distance which would be covered by all the cigarettes smoked by Mr. Labouchere in a year, were they placed together in a line.

I think that your reviewer must have confused my work with the many imitations of my work, when he classed my writings with the utterly silly articles to which he alludes. I have never written articles of that sort. My method, in my statistical articles, being to select a subject of interest and importance, and to show clearly the incidence of the facts connected with my subject. But for one article by me I suppose there are published ten or twelve articles by my imitators, and the most of these fully deserve the contemptuous words of your reviewer.

I see that during 1899-1900 I have published only four articles of a statistical nature, and all of them were on important subjects; also, my writings prior to 1899 have all been quite free from the senseless statistical stupidities to which your reviewer alludes. I am, in fact, no more connected with these foolish articles than Mr. Phil May is connected with the numerous bad imitations of his black-and-white work, to which is purposely given a superficial likeness to drawings by Mr. Phil May.

Permit me, Sir, to repudiate wholly the paternity of the foolish things with which your reviewer has credited me, all of which owe their existence to the not too scrupulous activity of my imitators.—I am, &c.,

J. HOLT SCHOOLING.

Twickenham: June 28, 1900.

Our Weekly Competition.

Result of No. 41 (New Series).

LAST week we offered a prize of One Guinea for the best reply to the following letter received by us:

"DEAR SIR,—I am most anxious, as one having literary aspirations, to cultivate style. Would you favour me with a few hints, or tell me where I could get the hints?—Yours truly, —"

The answers in this competition have been both numerous and excellent. Although we purposely fixed no limit as to length, we think that many of the reply-letters are weakened by over-

long. We award the prize to Mr. A. C. Armstrong, 25, Edwar street, Hampstead-road, N.W., for the following:

DEAR SIR,—Without having the least wish to infer that you are deficient in general intelligence, will you allow me to point out, with all due respect, that your letter certainly exhibits a present lack of that literary intelligence—I had almost said intuition—which is, or should be, the chief possession of every writer. Had you this special intelligence—it may come to you with years, or it may be latent and require development—I am certain you had not asked me such a question. As it is, I can offer you no advice without appearing somewhat rude; but I sincerely assure you that it is offered in all kindness and respect. It is the old, old Biblical tag: "Get wisdom, get understanding"—advice I would also offer to a great many fairly well-known authors who are not so honest as you are about their shortcomings.

Style, *per se*, does not exist; it is but synonymous with literary intellect, brain, thought. You cannot be a good stylist if you have no brains: silk and broadcloth will never sit well upon a skeleton. You are like a builder who wants to know all about the upper parts of a house before he has mastered the principles of foundation. Get something great to write about, and you may be sure that your method of putting it into words will also be great. Your very ability to conceive an interesting subject will ensure your telling it in an interesting manner. And the ability to conceive requires great development, whether the germ be latent or acquired. What is called style is but the expression of intellect; individual style is the outcome of a strong mental individuality.

In conclusion, I can do no better than to quote for your benefit a few words by Robert Buchanan, from an old article I have been re-reading only this last week. You will find that they endorse every word I say. He writes: "I know of no instance in literature where consummate mastery of verbal expression is associated with deficient intellectual power. Even Keats, the least meditative and most passionate of all the poets, and the nearest in power of verbal magic to Shakespeare, was intellectually prescient to the inmost fibres of his poetical being—pure absolute thinking and conceiving power being at the very root of his unexampled sensuous instinct, and leading him to those miracles of phrasing in which, I conceive, he has no modern rival."

I may add that I shall keep an eye open for your development; for, like that of the gentleman who asked "What is truth?" your honest innocence is distinctly interesting—and refreshing.

Other replies are as follows:

DEAR SIR,—This is not, alas, a matter for "hints." The truth must be spoken brutally, or at least "brutelement." Have you anything to say or to write that the world in the least desires to hear, or would be the better for hearing? If so, you will find yourself able to say it without any manufactured style. It may be that we ought to help lame dogs over stiles, but we want to know if they and their surroundings will be better off on the other side. To get rid of an impediment is not enough. Words, phrases, happy turns of language may be the clothes of thought, and sometimes they are garments becoming and ornamental; but to be this they must clothe something worth clothing. No sane man selects fine clothes for a scarecrow. "*Poeta nascitur, non fit*"; it is not so with style. That subtle thing grows as you grow, develops as you, I would fain hope, may develop. Your present style resembles your handwriting, which is—pardon me—somewhat immature. Read your Bible, my dear young friend. Read Bunyan—his is a better *Pilgrim's Progress* for you than that of Mark Twain. Read Ruskin, Stevenson, Macaulay—they will all give you something that you have not got already if you read them for the vital matter that is in them; but, for pity's sake, don't read anything, anyone, "to improve your style." You will only become a prig by so doing; you will gain many a trick, you will increase your self-consciousness, but very little else that is worth getting.

You ask me how you may secure a very elaborately decorated Corinthian capital: begin at the base and build up. But "*Non oivis homini contingit adire Corinthum*," and very likely you may exchange this style for the simpler Doric.—Yours, &c.,
T. C., Buxted.

DEAR SIR,—Simple, careful, and consecutive thought, combined with a daily study of Shakespeare's Works, the Bible, and Charles Lamb's Essays, should enable any man to attain style, approximately good according to his innate ability. Good style, like human growth, must come naturally.—Yours, &c.,
W. S., Weymouth.

DEAR SIR,—Make sure you possess literary "powers," not only "aspirations," then you may safely trust to developing a natural and easy style without cultivating an article sure to have a false ring in it, easily detected, not only by the critic, but by the ordinary reader.—Yours, &c.,

DEAR SIR,—"Style is the vehicle of the spirit," says Sydney Smith. To acquire it you must converse with the old sages and

philosophers. Weigh well their counsels. Read much, but choose the good for your mind as you would for your body, taking everything of the best. Read slowly, that you may digest it the more conveniently. To write aptly is a question of practice. The wisest reader makes the best author. Therefore study the style and manner of all those who by their works have kept the past alive, whose books are our friends and companions, and whose writings keep fresh scenes which, but for them, would be blank. Do not be disheartened by failures, but give of your best, and lay it humbly at the shrine of the great goddess Literature, remembering that—

Authors are judged by strange, capricious rules,
The great ones are thought mad: the small ones fools.

—Yours, &c.,

G. E. P., London.

DEAR SIR,—Read the best that has been written both in prose and poetry, which will show you how others have mastered the difficult art of expression. When you have felt something of the value of words, conveniently forget each individual style you have studied, and, taking pen in hand, commence to forge your own. Let it be the unforced, natural expression of the literary individuality within you disciplined by culture. Dress your thoughts as you would have them dressed, careful only that they are intelligible and defy no canons of good English. Imitate no author, however great his name or wide his influence. A good style is simply self-possessed personality that by nature has chosen, and by cultivation has perfectly adapted itself to, the use of the literary medium.—Yours, &c.,

H. J., London.

DEAR SIR,—Like yourself, I was at one time very anxious to solve the mysteries of style; I ended by acknowledging the absolute truth of M. de Buffon's axiom: "Le style c'est de l'homme." If you cannot find style in your own brain and temperament, be sure you will find it nowhere else. R. L. Stevenson tells us he acquired style by playing "the sedulous ape" to the well-known writers who had been before him; but I doubt if he owed as much to them as he did to himself.—Yours, &c.,

E. L. C., Redhill.

DEAR SIR,—You ask for advice on the cultivation of a literary style. "People think that I can teach them style. What stuff it all is! Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style." So said Matthew Arnold, and you can have no better master. Style is of course, innate. You may, however, bring yourself under the influence of the genius that has inspired the greatest masters of English prose. Take your degree at Oxford.—Yours, &c.,

A. G., Malvern.

DEAR SIR,—Have something to say. Say it as well and as shortly as possible. Then try to say it again better and more shortly.—Yours, &c.,

E. S. S., Nottingham.

MY DEAR YOUNG LADY,—Style cannot be learnt, nor do I know any "handy guide" to it. It may, though, be encouraged by a process of absorption, and to that end you should accustom yourself to examples of the finest writing. But do not labour unduly, for the feminine mind is more delicate than a man's, and the fine flower of it is more quickly spoilt by the close air of the study. Read your Bible diligently. For the rest, read whatever you think good. In fiction be careful. Let Jane Austen be your heroine, with Thackeray as hero, for in them you will find the whole art of novel writing. Avoid magazines and almost all modern novelists, especially those accounted brilliant, who cover shallowness with epigram. In writing be yourself. Choose always the simplest form of expression. Have an affection for short words, and do not worry about handsome adjectives. Keep your colours in your box until you know how to use them, and shun "purple patches" as you would the black death. Finally, remember this wholesome piece of advice: "Whenever you have written anything which you think particularly fine—strike it out."—Yours, &c.,

E. D., Chelsea.

DEAR MADAM,—This in reply to your flattering letter. As "brevity is the soul of wit," so originality is the soul of literature; and, unless you possess a spark of this "divine quantity," which will readily enable you to cultivate a style of your own, the only hint I can offer is, aspire to some other height than literature.—Yours, &c.,

A. S. H., Dalkeith, N.B.

Other replies received from: E. H., London; N. A., Beckenham; G. H., Didsbury; S. S. M., Edinburgh; J. D. W., London; L. R., London; H. W. D., London; H. W., London; A. W. D., London; A. W., London; A. F., Sutton; R. W. D. N., London; Z. McC., Whitby; J. B. N., Edinburgh; E. L. C., London; W. A. F., Bromley; A. G., Reigate; E. A., Wangford; E. J. N., Porthcawl; J. G., London; L. F., Manchester; F. L. A., London; J. C. S., Bristol; M. T., London; J. R. L., Belfast; L. L., Ramsgate; P. E., Bradford; A. R., London; J. J. P., Oswestry; E. H. H., London; C. C. H., Bristol; A. M., Maida Vale; L. C. J., North Berwick.

Competition No. 42 (New Series).

In our "Literary Week" columns, page 5, will be found the plot of a gruesome-grotesque novel, framed by Mr. Bernard Capes, and introduced by him into his article on "Plots," in the current *Cornhill Magazine*. We ask our readers to send us plots of the same type, and the usual prize of One Guinea will be awarded. We ask only for a clear matter-of-fact statement, the length of which should not exceed 350 words.

RULES.

Answers, addressed "Literary Competition, THE ACADEMY, 43, Chancery-lane, W.C.," must reach us not later than the first post of Tuesday, July 10. Each answer must be accompanied by the coupon to be found on the second page of Wrapper, or it cannot enter into competition. Competitors sending more than one attempt at solution must accompany each attempt with a separate coupon; otherwise the first only will be considered. We cannot consider anonymous answers.

New Books Received.

[These notes on some of the New Books of the week are preliminary to Reviews that may follow.]

THE BIRDS OF MY PARISH. BY EVELYN H. POLLARD.

This book belongs to the popular class of literary natural history. The identity of the parish does not appear to be revealed; its land is poor and marshy, and the home of a thousand birds, with which the author seems to be on absolutely conversational terms. (Lane. 5s. net.)

A HISTORY OF THE BARONETAGE. BY FRANCIS W. PIXLEY.

Since James I. created the first Baronet, no history of this hereditary dignity has been attempted. Deprived of the help of other historians, Mr. Pixley has gone to original documents wherever he could find them. Several popular beliefs concerning the Baronetage are attacked by Mr. Pixley, notably the idea that the first Baronetcies were sold to persons of no social standing, in order to put money into the King's purse. He also tilts at the notion, fostered by the Kings of Arms and Heralds, that the Baronetage is an Order ("whereas it is a Degree of Dignity Hereditary"), and at the popular habit of abbreviating Baronet to "Bart." The book is handsomely produced by the publishers. (Duckworth. 10s. 6d. net.)

In addition to the foregoing, we have received:

THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL.

Haweis (Rev. H. R.), *The Picture of Jesus* (Burnet & Isbister) 6/0

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

Baillie (Major F. D.), *Mafeking: a Diary of the Siege* ... (Constable & Co.) 6/0
Geden (Alfred S.), *Studies in Eastern Religions* (Kelly) 3/6
Khan (N. N.), *The Ruling Chiefs of Western India* (Thacker)
Albert (Maurice), *Les Théâtres de la Foire (1600-1789)* (Librairie Hachette)
Sears (E. H.), *An Outline of Political Growth in the Nineteenth Century* (Macmillan) net 12/6
Brown (H.), *War with the Boers* (Virtue)
Yesterday and To-day in Kruger's Land (Stock) net 1/0

EDUCATIONAL.

Blythe (W. H.), *Geometrical Drawing* (Camb. Univ. Press)
Peskett (A. G.), *Cai Juli Caesaris* (Camb. Univ. Press)

MISCELLANEOUS.

Allen (Phoebe) and Godfrey (Dr. H. W.), *The Sun-Children's Budget*. Vol. II., July, 1899, to April, 1900 (Wells, Gardner) 3/0
Collings (T. C.), *Cricket* (Unwin) 2/6
Whybrow (A. N.), *The Day-by-Day Cookery Book* (Sands & Co.)
The Geographical Journal. Vol. XV. (Stanford)

NEW EDITIONS.

Dickens (Charles), *Dombey and Son* (Nelson) 1/6
Dickens (Charles), *Barnaby Rudge* (Nelson) 1/0
Temple Shakespeare: Vol. XI. (Dent) net 4/6

* * * New Novels are acknowledged elsewhere.

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